THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY BUDGET

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

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C O N T E N T S

[1] Mr. Zeldin's reply has been retained in committee files and is available at https://docs.house.gov/meetings/IF/IF18/20250520/118283/HHRG-119-IF18-Wstate-ZeldinL-20250520-SD022.pdf.

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THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY BUDGET

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:15 a.m., in the John D. Dingell Room 2123, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Morgan Griffith (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Members present: Representatives Griffith, Crenshaw, Latta, Carter of Georgia, Palmer, Joyce, Weber, Pfluger, Miller-Meeks, Lee, Evans, Fedorchak, Guthrie (ex officio), Tonko (subcommittee ranking member), Schakowsky, Ruiz, Peters, Barragán, Soto, Auchincloss, Carter of Louisiana, Menendez, Landsman, and Pallone (ex officio).

Also present: Representatives Balderson, Obernolte, Houchin, Castor, Dingell, Fletcher, Mullin, and McClellan.

Staff present: Ansley Boylan, Director of Operations; Byron Brown, Chief Counsel; Clara Cargile, Professional Staff Member; Jessica Donlon, General Counsel; Andrew Furman, Professional Staff Member; Sydney Greene, Director of Finance and Logistics; Emily Hale, Staff Assistant; Christen Harsha, Senior Counsel; Annabelle Huffman, Clerk; Calvin Huggins, Clerk; Megan Jackson, Staff Director; Sophie Khanahmadi, Deputy Staff Director; Sarah Meier, Counsel and Parliamentarian; Joel Miller, Chief Counsel; Kaitlyn Peterson, Policy Analyst; Jackson Rudden, Staff Assistant; Chris Sarley, Member Services/Stakeholder Director; Kaley Stidham, Press Assistant; Matt VanHyfte, Communications Director; Katharine Willey, Senior Counsel; Giancarlo Ceja, Minority Environment Fellow; Timia Crisp, Minority Professional Staff Member; Austin Flack, Minority Professional Staff Member; Waverly Gordon, Minority Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel; Tiffany Guarascio, Minority Staff Director; Anthony Gutierrez, Minority Professional Staff Member; Caitlin Haberman, Minority Staff Director, Environment; Will McAuliffe, Minority Chief Counsel, Oversight and Investigations; Emma Roehrig, Minority Staff Assistant; Kylea Rogers, Minority Policy Analyst; and Maxwell Stern, Minority Intern.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The subcommittee will come to order.

And let me first say I apologize for the late start. It drives me crazy. But the President was speaking with the conference this morning, very engaging. I did leave a few minutes—I don't know how long before he finished, but I felt I needed to get here at least with some semblance, but I do apologize to you, Mr. Administrator, and to all the members who were here on time. Please forgive me. I will try not to let it happen again, but it is rare that the President comes to talk to the conference.

All right. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. H. MORGAN GRIFFITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

I am glad to have the Environmental Protection Agency Administrator, Lee Zeldin, a friend and former colleague, back in the House today.

Welcome back, Mr. Administrator. Is that the proper way to refer to you?

Mr. ZELDIN. Call me Lee.

Mr. GRIFFITH. All right, Lee, it is good to have you back to testify before the Subcommittee on Environment on President Trump's fiscal year 2026 budget request. This is certainly an important time for the EPA.

After 4 years of economically disastrous, legally questionable, and expensive policies of the Biden-Harris administration, it is a welcome sight to see President Trump and Administrator Zeldin focused on the rebuilding of the American economy and fixing the problems of the previous administration.

I remember when Administrator Zeldin was in the House representing the eastern part of Long Island. He was willing to work across the aisle in pragmatic—in a pragmatic way to try and address environmental issues like protecting the Long Island Sound or addressing emerging contaminants like PFAS. It is great to see him bringing these same problem-solving skills to the EPA, and there are a lot of problems there to solve, as we all know.

I am pleased to see that the Administrator recognizes that there is a middle ground to tread, where environmental protection does not need to come at the expense of good jobs and a strong economy. I know that the Administrator is already working to closely examine the previous EPA spending spree on Green New Deal-style programs that provided unprecedented levels of taxpayer funds to environmental groups and consultants, and to undue burdensome regulations that increased energy costs and made it more difficult to make things in America.

The reconciliation bill passed out of this committee last week is an important step in saving taxpayers money and redirecting EPA—the EPA to focus on its core mission of cleaning up the environment and protecting human health.

In February, Administrator Zeldin announced the broad pillars that the agency will focus on under his plan, "Powering the Great American Comeback." In March, Administrator Zeldin announced 31 regulatory actions to support greater energy production, a more robust auto manufacturing sector, a more predictable permitting process, and a more State-based enforcement system. I am glad to see that the EPA is taking another look at a lot of the rulemakings from the last administration, particularly those regarding air pollution, as many of those rulemakings didn't take into account industry's ability to meet compliance timelines on which pollution mitigation technologies would be able to be installed.

EPA has a duty to enforce the statutes that Congress passed, though I do believe encouraging cooperative compliance with industry will lead to better environmental outcomes and less economic disruption—and as I have often said, one of the problems we have is if we push beyond what industry can do, they just pick up and move to another country. And many of those pollutants, according to a NASA study, come right back to us because the NASA study showed a number of years ago, following a sandstorm, that it takes about 10 days for the air to get from the middle of the Gobi Desert in China to the eastern shore of Virginia—as many of those rulemakings that the EPA did previously didn't take into account industry's ability to meet compliance timelines—that is what we are talking about—of which pollution mitigation technologies were able to be installed.

In recent years the EPA's budget has been about $10 billion per year. However, under the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, the EPA received an astounding $41.5 billion, or more than 4 times its historical budget, to spend on electric vehicles, environmental justice, and renewable energy programs. From its founding and up until the past few years, EPA mostly operated as a scientific investigator and regulatory agency and, with the exception of the water infrastructure and Superfund programs, it did not administer lots of large grants.

President Trump's proposed budget would reduce EPA spending to a more sustainable level after years of out-of-control spending on programs and rules that bore little relation to the EPA's traditional mission of regulating pollution, setting science-based standards for potentially hazardous substances, and cleaning up waste sites. It seems the goal of the EPA in the last few years was an attempt to force change that Americans are not willing to buy.

I look forward to hearing more details from Administrator Zeldin about the reorganization reform efforts he is making.

The Environment Subcommittee stands ready to work with you, Administrator Zeldin, to help get the EPA back on track.

At this subcommittee's first hearing of Congress, we examined the implementation of the 2016 amendments to the Toxic Substances Control Act, often referred to as TSCA. We heard how the process for reviewing new and existing chemicals are in need of reform, particularly the ways in which the EPA evaluates potential chemical risks. We also held a hearing in March on ways to maximize brownfield cleanups. As we work on Brownfield reauthorization, I hope to collaborate with the EPA on ways to possibly set up some sort of preclearance permitting pilot program.

Our national security, our economic competitiveness, the health of our families, and the strength of our communities all depend on an EPA led by you that is working hard and efficiently for the American people. So I thank you again for appearing before us today and forgiving me for being late, and I look forward to your testimony.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Griffith follows:]

Chairman Morgan Griffith
Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Environment
"The Fiscal Year 2026 Environmental Protection Agency Budget"
May 20, 2025
As prepared for delivery

I'm glad to have Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin, a friend and former colleague, back in the House today to testify before the Subcommittee on Environment on President Trump's fiscal year 2026 budget request.

This is certainly an important time for the EPA.

After four years of economically disastrous, legally questionable, and expensive policies of the Biden-Harris Administration, it is a welcome sight to see President Trump and Administrator Zeldin focused on rebuilding the American economy and fixing the problems of the previous administration.

I remember when Administrator Zeldin was in the House, representing the eastern part of Long Island, he was willing to work across the aisle in a pragmatic way to try and address environmental issues like protecting the Long Island sound or addressing emerging contaminants like PFAS.

It is great to see him bringing these same problem-solving skills to EPA, and to be frank, there are a lot of problems there to solve.

I'm pleased to see that the Administrator recognizes that there is a middle ground to tread, where environmental protection does not need to come at the expense of good jobs and a strong economy.

I know that the Administrator is already working to closely examine the previous EPA's spending spree on Green New Deal-style programs that provided unprecedented levels of taxpayer funds to environmental groups and consultants and to undo burdensome regulations that increased energy costs and made it more difficult to make things in America.

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In February, Administrator Zeldin announced the broad pillars that the Agency will focus on under his "Powering the Great American Comeback" plan.

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As many of those rulemakings didn't take into account industry's ability to meet compliance timelines or which pollution mitigation technologies were able to be installed.

EPA has a duty to enforce the statutes that Congress passed, though I do believe encouraging co-operative compliance with industry will lead to better environmental outcomes and less economic disruption.

In recent years, EPA's budget has been about $10 billion per year.

However, under the so-called Inflation Reduction Act EPA received an astounding $41.5 billion, or more than four times its historical budget, to spend on electric vehicles, environmental justice, and renewable energy programs.

From its founding and up until the past few years, EPA mostly operated as a scientific investigator and regulatory agency, and with the exception of the water infrastructure and Superfund programs, it did not administer lots of large grants.

President Trump's proposed budget would reduce EPA spending to a more sustainable level after years of out-of-control spending on programs and rules that bore little relation to EPA's traditional mission of regulating pollution, setting science-based standards for potentially hazardous substances, and cleaning up waste sites.

It seems that the goals of EPA in the last few years were an attempt to force a change that Americans are not buying.

I look forward to hearing more details from Administrator Zeldon about the reorganization and reform efforts he is making at EPA

The Environment Subcommittee stands ready to work with you, Administrator Zeldin, to help get EPA back on track.

At this Subcommittee's first hearing of the Congress, we examined the implementation of the 2016 amendments to the Toxic Substances Control Act, often referred to as the TOS-CA law.

We heard how the process for reviewing new and existing chemicals are in need of reform, particularly the ways in which EPA evaluates potential chemical risks.

We also held a hearing in March on ways to maximize brownfield cleanups to support economic development.

As we work on brownfield reauthorization, I hope to collaborate with EPA on ways to possibly setup some sort of pre-clearance permitting pilot program.

Our national security, our economic competitiveness, the health of our families, and strength of our communities all depend on an EPA that is working hard and efficiently for the American people.

Thank you again for appearing before us today, Administrator Zeldin, I look forward to your testimony.

Mr. GRIFFITH. I now yield 5 minutes to the ranking member, Mr. Tonko of New York.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. PAUL TONKO, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And Administrator Zeldin, welcome to the committee—to the subcommittee. And I have to acknowledge that as a former student you were a constituent of New York's 20th congressional district, and so we welcome you back in that capacity.

President Trump's fiscal year 2026 budget request for EPA has been called "problematic," "an unserious proposal," and "maybe a bridge too far to be achievable." Now, these were the reactions of Republican appropriators last week, and I expect you will hear even less charitable reviews from Democrats on this subcommittee today.

This proposal includes a 55 percent reduction from fiscal year 2025 levels, resulting in agency funding levels not seen since the mid-1980s. If enacted, this would fundamentally dismantle the EPA as we know it and cripple the agency's ability to carry out its core mission of protecting the air we breathe and the water we drink. The request includes devastating cuts that will undermine States' efforts to protect public health and carry out their obligations, including the $2.46 billion reduction to the State revolving funds for water infrastructure and the $1 billion reduction for categorical grants which are critical to supporting staffing of State environmental agencies.

I do believe this is a part of a disturbing trend we are seeing to force more costs on to State governments, as is being done with the proposed cuts to Medicaid in the majority's reconciliation bill.

Similar to these funding cuts, earlier this year the Administration expressed the desire to reduce EPA staffing levels by 65 percent, which would return the agency to 1971 personnel levels, the agency's second year in existence. It is not credible to suggest that the agency can fulfill its statutory requirements, including all of the major environmental laws and amendments to those laws that have been enacted since the 1970s, with these proposed staffing levels. Cuts of this magnitude would not only hollow out the agency's expertise and capacity, but they are insensitive to the public servants who have dedicated their lives to supporting this agency's mission.

And it is worth reminding everyone of what that mission is: to protect human health and the environment. In just a few short months, I believe, the agency under Administrator Zeldin's leadership has lost sight of this mission. Mr. Zeldin launched the Powering the Great American Comeback Initiative focused on American energy, auto manufacturing, and artificial intelligence dominance.

Broadly speaking, I am not necessarily opposed to aspects of that agenda, but I also do not believe it is the appropriate role for our Nation's environmental regulator to be leading this effort, because EPA's contributions to those goals more or less translate to how we can reduce environmental protections and enforcement of those protections for the benefit of energy producers, the auto industry, and big tech, even if ordinary Americans will pay the price by breathing harmful air pollution, drinking contaminated water, and being exposed to dangerous chemicals.

We have already seen a slew of agency actions that will result in greater pollution and reduce our scientific capacity to understand just how that pollution will impact Americans' health and their well-being. This includes reconsidering rules that protect Americans from pollution, from power plants, from vehicles, and from industrial facilities, and weakening standards to keep PFAS out of our drinking water. Each of these public health protections up for reconsideration went through robust rulemaking processes and economic analyses, which found that every one of these rules delivers greater benefits to the American people in public health and in economic benefit terms than they cost.

I am also concerned by EPA's efforts to terminate previously awarded grants without producing any evidence of fraud, waste, or abuse. For each of these awards, the previous administration carried out competitive selection processes based upon requirements enacted by Congress.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Tonko follows:]

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Environment Ranking Member Paul D. Tonko

Hearing on "The Fiscal Year 2026 Environmental Protection Agency Budget"

May 20, 2025

Administrator Zeldin, welcome to the Subcommittee.

President Trump's Fiscal Year 2026 budget request for EPA has been called "problematic," "an unserious proposal," and "maybe a bridge too far to be achievable." These were the reactions of Republican Appropriators last week, and I expect you will hear even less charitable reviews from Democrats on this Subcommittee today. This proposal includes a 55% reduction from FY25 levels, resulting in agency funding levels not seen since the mid-1980s. If enacted, this would fundamentally dismantle the EPA as we know it and cripple the agency's ability to carry out its core mission of protecting the air we breathe and the water we drink.

The request includes devastating cuts that will undermine states' efforts to protect public health and carry out their obligations, including a $2.46 billion reduction to the State Revolving Funds for water infrastructure and a $1 billion reduction for categorical grants, which are critical to supporting staffing of state environmental agencies.

I believe this is part of a disturbing trend we are seeing to force more costs onto state governments, as is being done with the proposed cuts to Medicaid in the majority's reconciliation bill. Similar to these funding cuts, earlier this year the Administration expressed a desire to reduce EPA staffing levels by 65%, which would return the agency to 1971 personnel levels— the agency's second year in existence.

It is not credible to suggest that the agency can fulfill its statutory requirements— including all the major environmental laws and amendments to those laws that have been enacted since the 1970s— with these proposed staffing levels. Cuts of this magnitude would not only hollow out the agency's expertise and capacity, but they are insensitive to the public servants who have dedicated their lives to supporting the agency's mission.

And it is worth reminding everyone of what that mission is: To protect human health and the environment. In just a few short months, I believe the agency, under Administrator Zeldin's leadership, has lost sight of this mission.

Mr. Zeldin launched the "Powering the Great American Comeback" initiative focused on American energy, auto manufacturing, and artificial intelligence dominance. And broadly speaking, I am not necessarily opposed to aspects of that agenda, but I also do not believe it is the appropriate role for our nation's environmental regulator to be leading this effort.

Because EPA's contributions to those goals more or less translate to how can we reduce environmental protections and enforcements of those protections for the benefit of energy producers, the auto industry, and Big Tech, even if ordinary Americans will pay the price by breathing harmful air pollution, drinking contaminated water, and being exposed to dangerous chemicals. We have already seen a slew of agency actions that will result in greater pollution and reduce our scientific capacity to understand how that pollution will impact Americans' health and well-being. This includes reconsidering rules that protect Americans from pollution from power plants, vehicles, and industrial facilities, and weakening standards to keep PFAS out of our drinking water.

Each of these public health protections up for reconsideration went through robust rulemaking processes and economic analyses, which found that every one of these rules delivers greater benefits to the American people, in public health and economic benefits, than they cost. I am also concerned by EPA's efforts to terminate previously awarded grants without producing any evidence of fraud, waste, or abuse.

For each of those awards, the previous administration carried out competitive selection processes based upon requirements enacted by Congress. Whether or not Administrator Zeldin personally believes Congress was wasting taxpayer dollars when it directed EPA to carry out those funding opportunities is irrelevant. No Administrator should be the sole arbitrator of what is a good use of Congressionally directed taxpayer dollars, and yet we have seen billions of dollars impounded without justification.

Finally, I am very concerned by reports that EPA is planning to eliminate the Energy Star program, which is a voluntary, non-regulatory labeling program with strong support from industry and consumers. Energy Star has been incredibly effective at supporting American manufacturing, enabling people to lower energy bills, and reducing strain on our electricity system.

This seems obviously in line with the President's energy and economic agenda, and yet, there may be an effort underway to terminate the program. If we cannot even find common ground on a broadly popular, voluntary, low-cost program to benefit consumers, I have serious doubts that we will be able to find anything to agree upon this year.

Mr. Administrator, I appreciate you being here, and I hope we can work together to ensure that your agency and this committee have a productive, transparent relationship that honors the critical public health and scientific mission of the EPA.

I look forward to your testimony, and I yield back.

Mr. TONKO. And with that, Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I am now going to recognize the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Pallone, for his 5-minute opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. PALLONE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

President Trump's budget is a blueprint for disaster. Trump doesn't believe in government, and his budget continues his relentless assault on the Federal agencies whose mission it is to protect the health and well-being of the American people.

This budget would cut funding for the EPA by 55 percent, the largest cut in EPA's history. The proposed cut would seriously threaten public health and the environment. It also fails to deliver on many of the promises the Trump administration has made to deal with dangerous toxins like lead and PFAS, and prioritize polluters over public health and the environment.

While we only have the skinny budget to review at this stage, it does not give me confidence that anything more comprehensive will tell a different story. The budget calls categorical grants to States a "crutch," flying in the face of the cooperative federalism that has made EPA so successful in cleaning up toxic pollution and providing healthier futures for Americans. EPA is deserting the States to deal with serious climate and pollution issues on their own while EPA focuses on giving polluters free passes to poison our communities with reckless abandon.

And the skinny budget outlines major cuts to historically bipartisan programs that provide a lifeline to communities across the Nation. It cuts $250 million from the Superfund program, undermining our ability to clean up toxic waste sites throughout the Nation. It seeks to decimate the drinking water and clean water State revolving funds, which are the primary funding sources for water infrastructure projects. These State revolving funds are critical to ensuring communities have safe, reliable drinking water and wastewater services. This comes after EPA recently announced plans to rescind and delay the historic PFAS drinking water standard, raising serious questions about the Trump administration's commitment to safe, clean, and affordable water for all.

EPA is also walking away from its commitments by canceling competitively awarded grants where work is already underway in communities across the country with little or no explanation. And I have to say to the Administrator I am outraged by Administrator Zeldin's illegal freeze of obligated funds under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. This fund is meant to make energy more affordable, foster economic development, boost supply chains, and create good-paying jobs—all the things that the Trump administration says it supports—yet the Administrator has engaged in a smear campaign where he is spreading false and misleading statements about the program in an attempt to undermine it and strip away these funds. And I firmly believe the Administrator's actions are a violation of the law, and I am hopeful that these funds will be released soon so that our communities can benefit from these investments.

It is clear to me that under Administrator Zeldin's leadership, EPA is becoming an unreliable partner and illegally withholding congressionally directed funds. I am also concerned about troubling activities that will endanger the health and safety of American families, children, and workers. The Trump administration has made it clear that EPA cares more about polluters' bottom line than the communities and American children who will bear the brunt of these foolhardy decisions.

What is potentially most egregious is the attempt to roll back EPA's landmark endangerment finding. It is absolutely shocking that anyone in the year 2025 could look around and honestly say that climate change is not already harming Americans. It is.

And I am also troubled by EPA's recent reorganization plan. The effectiveness of the agency hinges on EPA having the career staff necessary to fulfill its mission. They are the backbone of the agency. Unfortunately, Administrator Zeldin's actions to indiscriminately fire hundreds of employees with plans to release thousands more shows a blatant disregard for the critical work career staff conduct on behalf of the American people every day. He continues to disingenuously claim to be fighting government waste while simultaneously eviscerating EPA's ability to appropriately manage programs and oversee—issue grants.

Finally, Administrator Zeldin is thumbing his nose at Congress's ability to conduct important oversight of this Administration. Committee Democrats have sent several letters to the Administrator demanding answers about certain actions he has taken. We have received very few answers, some coming just late yesterday, and this is unacceptable. The Energy and Commerce Committee is your authorizer, and we are tasked with conducting oversight. As the Administrator of EPA, you don't just owe Congress an explanation, but you also owe the American people an explanation.

You know, I—my—Republicans on this committee constantly talk about how great this committee is, and how they want to continue the great work of this committee, but we are not going to be a great committee if we can't actually conduct oversight over the EPA, which is one of the major agencies that we have oversight or jurisdiction over. We are not going to be a great committee if we can't have effective oversight, and Administrator Zeldin has made that impossible.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pallone follows:]

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.

Hearing on "The Fiscal Year 2026 Environmental Protection Agency Budget"

May 20, 2025

President Trump's budget is a blueprint for disaster. Trump doesn't believe in government, and his budget continues his relentless assault on the federal agencies whose mission it is to protect the health and well-being of the American people.

This budget would cut funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by 55 percent – the largest cut in EPA's history. This proposed cut would seriously threaten public health and the environment. It also fails to deliver on many of the promises the Trump Administration has made on dangerous toxins like lead and PFAS and prioritizes polluters over public health and the environment. While we only have the skinny budget to review at this stage, it does not give me confidence that anything more comprehensive will tell a different story.

The budget calls categorical grants to states a "crutch," flying in the face of the cooperative federalism that has made EPA so successful in cleaning up toxic pollution and providing healthier futures for Americans. EPA is deserting the states to deal with serious climate and pollution issues on their own, while EPA focuses on giving polluters free passes to poison our communities with reckless abandon.

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EPA is also walking away from its commitments by canceling competitively awarded grants where work is already underway in communities across the country with little or no explanation.

I remain outraged by Administrator Zeldin's illegal freeze of obligated funds under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. This fund is meant to make energy more affordable, foster economic development, boost supply chains, and create good-paying jobs – all the things that this Administration says it supports. Yet, the Administrator has engaged in a smear campaign where he is spreading false and misleading statements about the program in an attempt to undermine it and strip away these funds. I firmly believe the Administrator's actions are a violation of the law, and I am hopeful that these funds will be released soon so that our communities can benefit from these investments.

It is clear to me that under Administrator Zeldin's leadership, EPA is becoming an unreliable partner and illegally withholding congressionally directed funds.

I am also concerned about troubling activities that will endanger the health and safety of American families, children, and workers. The Trump Administration has made it clear that EPA cares more about polluters' bottom line than the communities and American children who will bear the brunt of these fool hearty decisions. What is potentially most egregious is the attempt to roll back EPA's landmark Endangerment Finding. It's absolutely shocking that anyone in the year 2025 could look around and honestly say that climate change is not already harming Americans.

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Finally, Administrator Zeldin is thumbing his nose at Congress' ability to conduct important oversight of this Administration. Committee Democrats have sent several letters to the Administrator demanding answers about certain actions he's taken. We have received very few answers – some coming late yesterday. This is unacceptable. The Energy and Commerce Committee is your authorizer, and we are tasked with conducting oversight. As Administrator of EPA, you don't just owe Congress an explanation, but also the American people.

And with that I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. And with that, I yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I thank the gentleman. We now conclude with Member opening statements.

The Chair would like to remind Members that, pursuant to the committee rules, all Members' opening statements will be made a part of the record.

Although it is not the practice of this subcommittee to swear in witnesses, I would remind our witness that knowingly and willfully making material false statements to the legislative branch is against the law under title 18, section 1001 of the United States Code.

We will give you an opportunity to give an opening statement followed by questions.

Today's witness, I think, is known to all of us, a former Member of the House, the Honorable Lee Zeldin, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr. Zeldin, you are now recognized for a 5-minute opening statement.

STATEMENT OF LEE ZELDIN, ADMINISTRATOR, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Mr. ZELDIN. Thank you, Chairman Griffith, Ranking Member Tonko, and members of the subcommittee.

Chairman Griffith, thank you for being such a great partner in ensuring that this committee is able to work closely with the EPA. That is very important. Thank you for the great work and leadership. It is an honor to appear before you today to discuss the President's fiscal year 2026 budget request for the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Since day one, EPA has swiftly moved to advance President Trump's directive to deliver clean air, land, and water for all Americans while restoring commonsense accountability and cooperative federalism to environmental policy. We are fulfilling our core mission of protecting human health and the environment while powering the great American comeback and removing unnecessary barriers that have burdened American families and businesses for far too long.

Since being sworn in as Administrator, my team has hit the ground running. I have now traveled to 17 States across the country, engaging with our dedicated regional staff and scientists, visiting Superfund sites and brownfields, and listening to farmers, business owners, and community residents who have had fantastic ideas on how the EPA can better work on their behalf.

Immediately upon President Trump's inauguration, EPA completed the largest wildfire cleanup in agency history in less than 30 days after the catastrophic Los Angeles wildfires. We have taken bold steps to combat PFAS contamination and have advanced redevelopment at 21 Superfund sites across 13 States, delisting all or parts of 4 sites from the National Priorities List. We have also completed 25 State implementation plans, 16 of which were backlogged from the prior administration.

With this renewed focus and commitment, EPA is working for the American people. We are revising the definition of "Waters of the United States" to align with the Supreme Court decision in *Sackett,* and have issued immediate action items for Mexico to permanently and urgently end the Tijuana River sewage crisis that has plagued southern California for decades. Following my trip to Saint Louis, we cut nearly 2 years from the cleanup timeline at the West Lake Superfund site, which has been contaminated by nuclear waste from the Manhattan Project. In fact, to mark the 100th day of the Trump presidency, EPA released a list of 100 environmental actions we took during those first 100 days, a pace that motivates us to keep up each and every day.

Together, these actions reflect the administration's commitment to environmental stewardship, cooperative federalism, and delivering results that make a real difference in people's lives.

In lockstep with the President's agenda, EPA is also helping to unleash American energy, pursue permitting reform, make America the AI capital of the world, and bring back American auto jobs. We have eliminated waste and abuse in areas like the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, reversed unlawful overreach like the so-called Good Neighbor Rule, and begun reconsidering many overreaching rules, including power plant and EV-related regulation that threaten grid reliability, energy affordability, and consumer choice.

I am proud of the monumental steps we took earlier this year towards energy dominance and expanding cooperative federalism. We are giving West Virginia and Arizona the primacy authority they have sought to protect groundwater and regulate themselves, as other States have had for years. It is no secret that the best innovative solutions are often found by working with those most familiar with the challenges faced.

These historic actions will reduce regulatory costs, which act as invisible taxes on Americans, making it more affordable to own a car, heat homes, operate a business, and bring manufacturing back to local communities. By reducing the EPA's budget by billions of dollars, the President's fiscal year 2026 budget demands maximum efficiency from the EPA while we continue to fulfill all of our statutory obligations.

Also included in the President's proposal is an additional $9 million above fiscal year 2025-enacted levels to equip EPA with funds to respond to drinking water disasters. There is also a $27 million increase in funding for Tribes to address drinking water and wastewater infrastructure on their lands.

At the Trump EPA, we will not view the status quo as a sacred cow that is untouchable. We will not consider the Biden-era regulations we inherited to be etched in stone, and we absolutely refuse to waste even a penny of tax dollars. With President Trump's leadership and the partnership of Congress, we will deliver measurable and real results, greater accountability, and a stronger environmental return on investment per dollar spent.

I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Zeldin follows:]

TESTIMONY OF

LEE ZELDIN
ADMINISTRATOR
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITEE ON ENVIRONMENT

May 20, 2025

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With President Trump's leadership and the partnership of Congress, we will deliver measurable and real results, greater accountability, and a stronger environmental return on investment per dollar spent. I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Thank you, Administrator Zeldin, a.k.a. Lee. We will now begin the questioning.

I would ask that Members not begin a new question to our witness as their 5 minutes expire. Because we have a number of Members who wish to waive on—and that is the practice in this subcommittee and in this committee—I am going to be fairly aggressive on the 5-minute deadline on both sides of the aisle, and so I would encourage you all to be ready to submit—if you see you only have 10 seconds left, don't ask the question, just submit it for questions asked after the hearing, which we are permitted to do.

With that said, I will now recognize myself for 5 minutes of questioning.

Administrator Zeldin, I understand why the agency terminated all environmental justice grants to align with President Trump's Executive order. I recognize those in many cases were spurious. But as often happens when you do this, there are some things in there that you think, wait a minute, that was pretty good.

And so in my district we had some flood mitigation—and these are not huge dollars, 50,000—in flood mitigation planning for the town of Clinchco; 50,000 in engineering for a former bank building demolition—the building is going to collapse into the road, and it is a problem—and riverwalk design in the town of Pound; and 70,000 demolition of a building in Pennington Gap, which flooded again in February. All of these are issues that are significant, and I don't know what they did to be put into environmental justice, this is just something right to do. And I am just asking you if you would be willing to help us work to see if we can't find some other ways to take care of some of those important projects that actually are meritorious.

Mr. ZELDIN. I would love to work with you, Chairman, have my team work with yours.

And the same message goes to other members of this committee. There are some cases of grants where the entire grant had major issues. There are other grants where there were smaller issues. And there's appropriated funding that is going to continue to go out the door. We are having this conversation in the middle of a fiscal year. So while we are going from one administration to the next, we might go from one administration's priorities to the current administration's priorities. We, I think, have plenty of opportunities to be able to work together to get this funding out responsibly.

Mr. GRIFFITH. All right. Now I am going to turn to the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund awards.

I know that you—that is all tied up in litigation, but it is interesting to me. And I talked about it last week, as well. One of the awardees is technically headquartered in my district in southwest Virginia—actually in Christiansburg, the Appalachian Community Capital. And I understand it is a bank, and a financial institution, and it is a pass-through. The problem is that this organization received—underscore—$500 million. Previously, in 2023, their entire budget was $4.3 million, of which 2.8 was from a Federal grant. In 2024 they suddenly received $500 million.

Now, when I found out about this and I went and looked at their legal address where they are supposed to be headquartered in Christiansburg, Virginia, I went up to the building. It was after hours. There is no sign. There is a financial institution there, but it is not the Appalachian Community Capital. Now, whether they have a person assigned in there, whether or not they have a cubicle, I don't know. Not saying they don't. Not saying they are not functioning out of that building, but there is no indication to the public that this institution which received $500 million to hand out from the EPA is doing anything there.

Now, again, they very well could have a cubicle inside. They could have somebody in there working. But the sign on the door was for a different financial institution. The CEO has an address in Washington, DC. So if we are trying to get these monies out, even if you accept that they are trying to get these monies out into the various communities, it raises all kinds of questions in my mind.

I am assuming that raised questions in your mind, as well. Am I correct? That type of thing.

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, Chairman. And to that point, it is important to point out Appalachian asked for a billion, and they ended up receiving 500 million, even though the year that they asked for the funding, in 2023, they spent less than 4.5 million. One of many issues.

And one more thing to point out, Chairman. A reviewer noted that Appalachian plants used $215 million to finance 600 zero-emission vehicles and 105 million to finance 700 charging stations. This is $358,333 per EV vehicle, $150,000 per charging station.

So it is important to get into the weeds and understand, and I think the example that you brought up is one of many fantastic ones to talk about.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Well, and I would love to know where the charging stations are, if they exist.

That being said, and my time running out, I will yield back and now recognize the ranking member from New York, Mr. Tonko.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And again, welcome, Mr. Zeldin. You previously committed to following the law, and stated your belief that science should be left to the scientists. So I would like to focus on just how well you have been fulfilling those commitments.

To start, you initiated an effort to reconsider the 2009 endangerment finding that greenhouse gas emissions threatened the public health and welfare of current and future generations. Now, I have no doubt we may disagree about just how to appropriately regulate sources of climate pollution, but I am frankly shocked that there is a question of whether or not climate pollution harms the Americans' health and welfare.

The endangerment finding is based on science, and scientists both within and without the Federal Government have continually reaffirmed that climate pollution does in fact harm our health and our welfare. So can you cite any peer-reviewed research that calls into question the science used to make the initial 2009 endangerment finding?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, first off, Ranking Member Tonko, it is important to note, to follow the law, to follow our obligations under the law, I am not allowed to prejudge outcomes. We are going to go through a rulemaking process. We will follow the Administrative Procedures Act. There will be a public comment period.

To your point more specifically, it is important to note that when the 2009 endangerment finding was done, they didn't review carbon dioxide alone. It is carbon dioxide when mixed with five other well-mixed gases, which was called the "greenhouse gases." Even though they were supposed to do it specifically on mobile sources, some of those greenhouse gases—some of those other well-mixed gases aren't even emitted from motor vehicles. But they didn't study each of these six individually, they studied all six collectively.

They had multiple other mental leaps that were done. They didn't say that carbon dioxide endangers public health. They say that carbon dioxide, when mixed with five other well-mixed gases, contribute to climate change. How much, you might ask? They don't say. But the numbers north of zero they say contribute, not causes. And then they say climate change endangers public health.

So it is just important to follow the multiple mental leaps. But as far as peer-reviewed studies, it is important when that—to note when that 2009 endangerment finding was reached, they didn't study any of these six gases individually.

Mr. TONKO. Reclaiming my time, I hear the prejudged statement, but I don't think major regulatory processes are launched on a whim. So can you not point to any scientific evidence to warrant a reconsideration in the first place?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, in addition to what I just stated, they also didn't factor in any of the—obviously—the scientific developments since over the last 16 years, there has not been any public comment period over the course of the last 16 years, they haven't factored in innovation. Emissions have been down over the course of the last 20 years.

But getting back to the heart of your initial question, not even when they did the 2009 endangerment finding did they ever conduct reviews of each emission individually.

Mr. TONKO. Well, in addition to the elimination of atmospheric research, I am very concerned by the public reporting around the future of the Office of Research and Development. ORD conducts independent research, and this independence is critical to both informing regulatory decision-making and ensuring high levels of scientific integrity at the agency. The Office of Inspector General identified—and, I quote—"promoting ethical conduct and protecting scientific integrity" as a top management challenge in fiscal year 2024.

How do you plan to address this challenge if ORD is significantly reorganized or, in fact, eliminated?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, for one, we will fulfill all statutory obligations. Two, it is important to note that inside of program offices science and research is done. Additionally, as part of the reorg that was announced a couple of weeks back, science and research are being elevated inside of all different program offices. There is a new office inside of the Office of Air and Radiation focusing on State air partnerships, advancing cooperative federalism, and working on State implementation plans. There is a new Office of Applied Sciences and Environmental Solutions.

The scientific work that we do in fulfilling our statutory obligations is important.

Mr. TONKO. OK, let me reclaim my time here. Has EPA evaluated how closing or significantly reducing ORD would affect its ability to fulfill statutory obligations while ensuring scientific integrity across the agency?

Mr. ZELDIN. Absolutely.

Mr. TONKO. And will you share that evaluation with members of the subcommittee?

Mr. ZELDIN. Sure, we could talk about it here today.

Mr. TONKO. OK. Well, my time has expired, so I will yield back, but thank you for your response.

Mr. JOYCE [presiding]. Thank you. The ranking member yields back. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Latta, for his 5 minutes.

Mr. LATTA. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Mr. Administrator, welcome back to the House. It is good to see you today.

You know, for far too long, the EPA has ballooned well beyond its original scope. Over time the agency has amassed sweeping regulatory powers that increasingly bypass legislative oversight. What does that leave us with? High cost for the taxpayer; burdensome, unworkable regulatory conditions for industry; stifled innovation and manufacturing; and energy insecurity with decreased domestic production, high costs, and Federal overreach for our energy mix.

We heard extensive testimony from industrial leaders across the board that the Biden administration's EPA standards were technologically unfeasible. President Trump's proposed discretionary budget decreases the EPA budget by over half of last year's budget, making many commonsense reforms to spend American taxpayer dollars in thoughtful ways to effectively improve our environment.

And one of the things that we have heard so many times is—well, you know, what are your thoughts, especially when we hear from the industry that the EPA would come up with some kind of a standard that there was no existing technology to even meet it, but they were demanding that it be done. In a lot of cases, it was just going to put businesses out of business because they couldn't meet the standard.

So how do you see the EPA dealing in the future on issues like that?

Mr. ZELDIN. We inherited a lot of regulations that were enacted in 2023, 2024 seeking to stimulate the economy, choosing to suffocate the economy as if it is a binary choice between protecting the environment and growing the economy. The Trump EPA chooses both. We want to protect the environment and grow the economy. This isn't a binary choice. These regulations would cause all sorts of companies and entire industries to have to go out.

The concerns end up impacting the American economy, the American national security, and our environment, as it is important to point out that we tap into our own supply safer than so many other countries do elsewhere around the world. And it is important to look at the ability of American companies to be able to hit the compliance with these regulations that are put into place.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. You know, I read with interest your Powering the Great American Comeback. And you know, in this committee we have been talking about two things in particular. We have to have more energy produced in this country and, at the same time, we have to really make sure that we are looking at permitting, we have got to get the permitting reform done to be able to move forward. Because especially when we look at our data centers that are coming online, that—the amount of—more energy is going to have to be produced in this country.

So could you share how the Powering the Great American Comeback Initiative is going to help, especially in these two areas that you talk about on the energy side and also on the permitting?

Mr. ZELDIN. Sure. There's five pillars. Number one, clean air, land, and water for all Americans. Number two is unleash energy dominance. Pillar three, advance cooperative federalism and permitting reform. Four, making America the AI capital of the world. Five, bringing back American auto jobs.

Why are we doing this? Because the American public is demanding it. The core mission of EPA is protecting human health and the environment. So one might ask, well, why would you be working on helping to unleash energy dominance? Well, because we were paying attention to the American public last fall when they were demanding that we heed their concerns as it relates to their struggle to be able to afford to make ends meet, because we heard from Americans who had to choose between whether or not to put groceries in their refrigerator, heat their home, or get prescription drugs they need to survive. They had to choose between the three.

So we could say, you know, listen, we are not going to do anything to help with this other stuff, it is not part of the core mission of EPA, and we can thumb our nose to the American public. But instead, the Trump EPA chooses to heed the call of the American public. That is what we are going to do. We are going to do it proudly.

Now, as it relates to the two that you might be referencing as far as unleashing energy dominance, make America the AI capital of the world, this is a partnership. In working with other agencies, the President created the National Energy Dominance Council. These agencies are going to work together.

And when you talk about permitting reform, here is an idea. Those who want to invest in America, that they don't have to go through 15 months of a permitting process before some other agency comes in and tells them, here is an issue that is going to stop your project. The person who is making the investment scratching their head, saying, "Well, why don't you tell us that 15 months ago?" Well, that is because the Government was being its normal self and not working efficiently and not collaboratively. And as a result, the permitting process might require more time, more cost, less certainty.

So EPA is going to do our part, and one of the ways that we can help with permanent reform actually doesn't even require an act of Congress. We can just stop gumming up the works with all sorts of different processes that we inherited where we realized the EPA was just trying to slow things down to slow things down. Well, we don't feel good about taking away, stripping away that investment in this country. And I am glad that you are asking, Congressman, and I look forward to working with you on it.

Mr. LATTA. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My time has expired and I yield back, and I will submit my other questions to the Administrator in writing. Thank you.

Mr. JOYCE. The gentleman yields. The Chair recognizes the ranking member of the committee, Mr. Pallone, for his 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. PALLONE. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I have to disagree with the Administrator's vision. I don't think anyone in America voted last November to harm —to ask the Government to harm their health and safety. And if you are talking about grocery prices, they are not lower, they are higher. And if you talk about our energy dominance, that has to be linked to clean energy, which you and the Trump administration just are completely getting rid of.

And if you talk about getting a permit, well, under the reconciliation bill—which is the reason I think most of our colleagues aren't here on the other side of the aisle, is because the President is here trying to convince them to vote for that garbage—and under that bill, if you just pay $1 million—I guess that is for the LNG permit—or you pay 10 million for a pipeline permit, then you automatically get the permit, and you don't have to go through any kind of EPA review whatsoever because the permit and the payment of the check is deemed in the public interest.

So, you know, you have undertaken multiple waves of utterly arbitrary and harmful cuts to important programs and grants. Thankfully, courts have recognized that your actions are illegal, and have ordered a hold on these mass terminations and withholding of funds unless you could show that grants were only terminated after an individual review.

And EPA officials have attempted to exploit that loophole by asserting that grants have been individually reviewed, without offering evidence to support such claims. Fortunately, the courts have not been falling for it. One judge recently wrote that, even after reviewing thousands of pages of documents produced by the EPA, there was not a single document demonstrating an individual review of any individual grantee.

In another case, an EPA official submitted a sworn declaration stating that—and I am quoting now—"EPA leadership conducting an individualized grant by grant review to determine which grants should continue, which should be modified, and which should be terminated." But a declaration in a separate case indicates that another Trump appointee in a single day conducted a review and determined that nine entire programs constituting hundreds of grants should be terminated.

And I would ask unanimous consent to enter the declarations of Daniel Coogan and Travis Voyles into the record. Mr. Chairman, these are actually court records. They are two EPA Trump employees that have contradicted each other, in my opinion, on the individual review issue.

In any case, if—I will hold them so I can reference them if necessary, and then give them to you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GRIFFITH [presiding]. And is it the complete transcript of their testimony, or just an affidavit?

Mr. PALLONE. A transcript of their testimony.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Oh, if it is the complete transcript, then—

Mr. PALLONE. All right.

Mr. GRIFFITH [continuing]. It will be acceptable.

[The information appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. PALLONE. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, but I want to clear this up with a question.

Administrator, please explain what, if any, process EPA has undertaken to individually review grants prior to their termination, who was involved in that process, and what records exist documenting the supposed process of this review for each individual terminated grant, if you could.

Mr. ZELDIN. That has been an extensive process.

First, it is important to point out that one of the two employees you mentioned are actually a career EPA employee, it is not a Trump political appointee.

When we came in, we started working with the career staff that was here previously. That includes career staff involved with oversight, or lack thereof, of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

Mr. PALLONE. But Mr. Zeldin—I know, because I am going to be cut off by the chairman, not that he is, you know, trying to do it, but the time is there—I would like what records exist documenting the supposed process of this review for each individual terminated grant. If you can't give that to me today, then I would ask that you submit it through the chairman in the future, as soon as possible. Would that be OK?

Mr. ZELDIN. Whatever explanation that you are looking for——

Mr. PALLONE. OK.

Mr. ZELDIN. Again, we have a process——

Mr. PALLONE. OK, you said you will provide it.

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. Every individual——

Mr. PALLONE. Now, let me ask you one more question, and then I will close.

Do you think that one EPA official deciding in a single day that nine separate programs with hundreds of grants should be terminated constitutes an individualized review?

That is what one of the employees said in—to the court. Do you think that that——

Mr. ZELDIN. I was the one who made the decision, and I made the decision after doing an individual review of every grant specifically. I personally——

Mr. PALLONE. Did not——

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. Reviewed every single grant that I canceled.

Mr. PALLONE. OK. Now, in the time—in my opinion, you know, in the time that you have led this agency you have decimated the critical work that EPA does. You have left communities across the country scrambling with few answers. Your polluter-first agenda will have a damaging impact on American workers, families, and children for years to come. And if this is the great American comeback, then I pray for the country.

And with that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognizes gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Joyce, for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOYCE. Thank you, Chairman Griffith and Ranking Member Tonko, for holding this important hearing.

And thank you, Administrator Zeldin, for testifying here today.

The Biden administration's EPA championed the worst tendencies of bureaucracy, unleashing a slew of burdensome rules that were often unrealistic or impossible for U.S. businesses, U.S. farmers, or U.S. communities to address. Now, with the Trump administration and your leadership, we have seen a return to a more commonsense approach that seeks to realize our shared goal of a cleaner and a healthier environment by prioritizing engagement with all stakeholders and leveraging something that we recognize to be so important, and that is American innovation.

We have also seen the benefits of this approach, as the relief provided from these burdensome regulations has been accompanied by a multitude of environmental wins.

I would ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a release detailing these clean environmental actions.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Without objection, so ordered.[1]

Mr. JOYCE. Administrator Zeldin, how has streamlining the EPA's workforce and creating a more efficient agency helped you better accomplish your mission of protecting human health and the environment simultaneously?

Mr. ZELDIN. One of the beauties of how we have approached this process is that we solicited feedback from people who had been inside of the agency for a very long time inside of each of the program offices. And we asked them, "What do you need in order to be able to do your job better?"

With regards to all statutory obligations, we inherited so many backlogs. The pesticides review was something like 14,000. New chemical review, several hundred. State implementation plan backlog, small refinery exemption backlog, and the list goes on. All these backlogs we inherited. We show up on day one, it is like, "Hey, here you go." That is OK. We don't mind getting a big mess to fix. We are happy to do it.

So what happens when we have this 14,000 pesticide review backlog, or the—a 500 or so new chemical backlog? How do we fix it? So we go to the Office of Chemicals. I speak not just to the political staff, I speak to the career staff. "What do you need?"

There's primarily two needs. One is they need—they could use more scientists. Great. That is part of the reorg, we get them more scientists. And two, they need help in updating their infrastructure. Now, Congress helped with that. It was part of an anomaly in a CR, $17 million to update the infrastructure. Thank you. And we are putting it to good use. And we are going to be able to get down that backlog. With the pesticide review we have already gotten it down over 2,300 coming into this, and we are going to keep going.

Mr. JOYCE. Thank you for that hard work. I appreciate the EPA providing a path to regulatory relief for companies impacted by the

[1] The information has been retained in committee files and is included in the Documents for the Record at https://docs.house.gov/meetings/IF/IF18/20250520/118283/HHRG-119-IF18-20250520-SD817.pdf.

EPA's HON rule, which imposed new regulations on ethylene oxide. As you know, ethylene oxide is critical in many sectors, including the use of sterilization of medical equipment. Over 50 percent of medical devices in the United States utilize ethylene oxide for that sterilization.

When can we expect decisions on the request made under the relief pathway to ensure companies are not spending millions of dollars in an effort to comply with the flawed Biden rule?

Mr. ZELDIN. Thank you, Congressman, for raising this, and we are working to get it done this year. We are doing a lot at once, and that is OK. I know that it is a lot that is on our plate, but we are going to get it done.

We received a lot of concerns and, you know, for the sake of time I—you know, I could either go through some of them or not. It is up to you, Congressman.

Mr. JOYCE. Well, thank you. I look forward to that answer.

Administrator Zeldin, at the start of this month the House passed my CRA, which would overturn the EPA's rule that granted a California waiver, allowing them to more effectively utilize what consumers want. You talked about that in your statement, listening to what the consumer, what America wants. America wants to be able to choose what type of engine is under the hood of their car.

Can you speak on the importance of consumer choice and how free-market innovation, not unattainable government mandates, are the most effective way to lower emissions in the auto industry?

Mr. ZELDIN. Congressman, the Trump EPA believes that if you want to go out and purchase a gas-powered vehicle, you should be able to go out and purchase a gas-powered vehicle. If you want to go out and purchase an electric vehicle, you should go out and be able to purchase an electric vehicle. Consumer choice is very important.

The ranking member of the full committee made a reference to clean energy without referencing baseload power and the need for it as if wind, an intermittent source, is going to be a substitute for all of these forms of baseload power. So consumer choice is important, and being realistic is incredibly important. Common sense is something the American public demands.

Mr. JOYCE. Thank you. My time is expired. Thank you for the realistic, commonsense approach that you are directing the EPA.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the gentlelady from Illinois, Ms. Schakowsky.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Administrator.

Illinois has about 1 million lead pipes, and these are very dangerous for our communities. It is the second-highest number of lead pipes in the Nation, and it presents a real threat to our children, our children at school, our families, our businesses, and we need help.

And it seems to me that the EPA, who has cut a lot of money out of things that could go to addressing the lead pipe issue—and I would hope that when you think about what that really means, we are talking about very dangerous chemicals that then get in the water, that get in our children. And I am asking you if you think this is a serious issue and if there is a way that the Environmental Protection Agency would take a sense of responsibility and help us in our State—the second-highest in the country of lead pipes—to help us create more safety for our community, for all aspects of our communities.

We need you to take some responsibility with us. We are not asking just for a handout. We are doing work ourselves. But isn't there some way that this would be a priority for the Environmental Protection Agency?

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, Congresswoman, that is—it is an important issue, and EPA fulfills all of our statutory obligations. If there is a desire of Congress to create a new statutory obligation from EPA, we will make sure that we get it done. We do offer technical assistance to States on this, and we also are working with States as it relates to lead replacement.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Well, with that, then, I am going to keep your word, I know, and come back to you and talk about what you can do to make sure that all the families and the children and the businesses that are suffering now—I look forward to working with you on that.

I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentlelady yields back. Now recognizes the—recognize the gentlelady of Florida, Ms. Lee, for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And welcome to you, sir. We appreciate you being with us today. I would like to start by acknowledging that we appreciate your commitment to returning the EPA to its intended and appropriate mission.

You touched on something just a few moments ago that is so important, and that is that we can both protect the environment and grow the economy simultaneously. So your commitment and your vision that the EPA needs to get back to that function and focus on finding efficiencies, whether it relates to permitting, application review, or any of the other compliance standards that have operated as an inhibition to productivity and economic growth, that you are committed to doing that responsibly is very important.

Among other things, you have emphasized a return to the EPA's core statutory responsibilities. Basing regulatory decisions on sound science is essential, whether the issue is air, water, or chemicals. We have seen repeated reliance on the Integrated Risk Information System, or IRIS, a program that was not authorized by Congress and has long been criticized for a lack of transparency and scientific rigor.

Can you speak to how you intend to restore confidence in EPA chemical assessments and ensure greater transparency for those who are engaging with the agency?

Mr. ZELDIN. Number one, it is important to follow the science, to follow sound science, to consider all science in making—to making the best decision possible.

Ms. LEE. Now, one thing you touched on a moment ago that I think is really important on the subject of Powering the Great American Comeback and the five pillars, the American energy dominance, you referenced not just permitting reform but that one essential component of that was interagency coordination so that people who are engaged in that process don't go through years of review only to then get to the end and encounter a different Government agency. Share with us a little bit more about how you are working on that, and why you think it is important.

Mr. ZELDIN. There are equities that different agencies have in a permitting process, and it would be a much better idea going forward when Congress is considering possible ways to do it legislatively or agencies are figuring out ways to do it in the meantime, to work with those who are applying for the permit in a simultaneous, efficient process.

I have heard from Members of Congress where there is a company over in Europe that does 70 percent of their business in China, and they want to bring a multibillion-dollar investment into the United States. But the reason why they are not going into that state here in the U.S. is because they feel like it will take too much time, that years down the road and after they spend a fortune they may still not get an approval at the end of the process. And if there is more certainty, less time, less cost, that decision for that business in Europe will be to come to bring their dollars here.

It doesn't make sense to me that 20 months down the road, out of nowhere, you know, Fish and Wildlife might be giving them a complaint of something that they need to deal with that you could have just told them a year and a half earlier.

And the same thing on EPA's front. If there is any EPA equity in permitting reform where we need an applicant to do something, we don't want to wait 2 years down the road and then gum up the works. Just be forthcoming with those applying for the permit out of the gate, and let them know what EPA is going to need so that they can address it. And that is what we have been doing with permit applicants all across the country since I was confirmed.

Ms. LEE. Similarly, one of the things that is of great interest to many of us here in Congress is ensuring that the United States does remain the artificial intelligence capital of the world. I would love to hear more about your perspective on how the EPA can be part of ensuring that we achieve that objective.

Mr. ZELDIN. For one, it is going to require more baseload power. It is going—what is interesting, when I was going through the confirmation process, meeting with Senate Republicans and Democrats, everyone was agreeing that we need to make America the AI capital of the world. And at least privately, everybody was agreeing that we are going to need more power in order to be able to do that. And I think that there is a—there is room here for Congress and for the administration to heed the call of the American public to help get that investment to win this race. And there are some people who might be your constituents who might be a bit spooked by how powerful AI is and what it might become. But if we don't lean into it, we are going to lose and China will eat our lunch.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentlelady yields back. Now I recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Peters, for 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. PETERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Administrator, for being here. I am going to begin with “thank you” because I represent San Diego, and I want to just thank you for your recent visit to the South Bay and for your work—your tour of the Tijuana Valley International Water—Wastewater Treatment Plant. That contamination issue remains what I believe is one of the catastrophes, environmentally, of the hemisphere, and we were so encouraged by your commitment to working on 100 percent solution. Even today I got your release as if it was written for me, that you are advancing the timeline from—to get to 35 MGD, million gallons a day, within 100 days. So I can’t say anything but thank you for that. That is really a welcome thing.

We have all worked really hard to get resources here, Republicans and Democrats. Democrats, we are all committed, but I will tell you some of my best advocates were the seven Republican Navy Seals who had to train in that water. So again, thank you very much. You have a partner here, and we are happy to have a partner with you.

I will say, you know, I do—I appreciate the need for energy here, and I know that that may be Secretary Wright more than you, but I would just say I think that is all-of-the-above energy—I don’t think it is just oil and gas—to achieve American energy dominance. And to the extent we do permit reform, which I am very interested in, I hope we are talking about all kinds of energy, and we are not selecting out some things for fast tracking and other things for slow tracking. I don’t think that is what industry wants. I don’t think that serves the country.

But I want to talk to you about something along those lines that I hope we can agree on, and that is methane. You know, we had—in 2016 President Obama issued administrative rules to limit fugitive methane emissions. The Trump administration repealed them, the first Trump administration. The Biden administration issued new rules to limit methane emissions, and now we are looking at a repeal or partial repeal or a total relook. And I would just suggest to you that that is not good for the environment, and it is not good for business.

What we are hearing from industry, actually, is they wanted a partial reconsideration of methane rules that would preserve the majority of the rule structure. And either—places like Exxon, Total Energy, Cheniere, AXPC, which represents 60 percent of U.S. production of oil and gas—or gas, they want strong rules on methane and they want bipartisan and durable regulation. I think we have to do that with Congress, because when the Trump administration leaves you are going to have potentially another administration that takes a whole different tack.

And what we are hearing again and again is these producers need certainty. And I know you worked here, I know how frustrated you must have been from time to time when you couldn’t get engagement from the administration on working out a rule. So I would suggest to you that if we could come up with a rule that regulated emissions—it could be emission-specific, not technology-directed, which the last two Democratic administrations have put out there—let industry figure out how to achieve an emissions target, give them an emissions target, give folks who have a hard time to comply assistance—we tried to do that in the IRA—give enough time to do it, but put enforceability in so that everybody is in the tent.

I think we could come up with something that both protects the environment to the extent we are using oil and gas but also helps business achieve what you say, unleash energy abundance or dominance, because they can't do that without certainty. Is that something that you think we could work together on? I would just hope that we could do that together.

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, Congressman, I would be happy to sit down with you and to be able to hear your concerns and requests. We are at an early stage of the process that will include a public comment period. As we are going through the rulemaking, I have not prejudged outcomes of that rulemaking. If you would like to sit down at this early part of that reconsideration, I would love to do it.

Mr. PETERS. Well, here is the advantage of legislation, is we don't have to go through that. We could come up with a deal within 30 days and put it into legislation and not have to go through the rulemaking process that takes so long.

And I would just say, too, that to the extent you are going to—I think you suggested you are going to wholly reconsider the methane rules quad O and subpart W—the industry has no idea what that entails, and then there is even more uncertainty. And they have invested billions of dollars in compliance. And when Exxon tells you, you know, "Hey, leave the rules in place, we would rather have the rules than have you repeal the rules and, you know, jerk us back and forth again"—and this is, you know, this is on both parties—maybe it is better for us to do that here, without the incredible drag of the regulatory process, which, again, can be reversed by the next administration.

So I would suggest we—if you want to do the rulemaking, that is fine. But simultaneously, why don't we see if we can't come up with a deal that this committee could put before the full committee and then on the President's desk? Would you be willing to work on that?

Mr. ZELDIN. As far as the legislation piece, I am happy to work with the committee to the extent that they are asking for any technical assistance or answers. From the regulatory standpoint, that is where the agency has the lead. As far as legislation crafting, that is something for you all to let me know if there is any way I can assist.

Mr. PETERS. We would love your help.

Thank you, I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognizes the vice chairman of this subcommittee, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Crenshaw.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for holding this important hearing.

And most of all, thank you to you, Administrator Zeldin. It is good to see you in this position. I can't express my appreciation for, I think, bringing this agency back to a sense of pragmatism and away from ideological endeavors and—because I think we all want clean air, we want clean water, and we care about the environment. We care about being good stewards of the environment. And I look forward to working with you more on getting us back on track.

One question that is—I have for you important to my district. You know, being—my district being the hub of many energy companies, but also many chemical companies and chemicals, the word "chemical" even seems to have a bad connotation to it these days, but it is vital for our modern way of life. And we are coming up on review of the Toxic Substances Control Act, TSCA.

What actions is the agency taking to address this backlog for reviewing new—for reviewing—sorry—the backlog that—reviewing under section 5 of TSCA, what actions is the agency taking to address that backlog and fulfill the obligations to review new chemical applications within 90 days? This is something that hasn't happened under the last administration.

Mr. ZELDIN. Congressman, there are two key aspects of how we have attacked this. One, on the personnel side, we want to and are adding more scientists towards this effort. There is an ability to get through more of the backlog if we can increase the bandwidth inside of that office. And the second piece of it is with technology. It is outdated technology. There is a lot of new technology, including AI, that we are able to successfully tap into. You add those pieces, the expanded bandwidth of personnel plus the advancements in technology, and we are confident that we are going to be able to tackle the backlogs that we inherited.

Mr. CRENSHAW. I am glad to hear it is a priority. Again, these companies need some consistency and some understanding of what they—what kind of timelines they can adhere to.

Related to that question, I think in the past we have seen some unreasonable assumptions while conducting risk evaluations under section 6 of TSCA. So that includes failing to differentiate between different conditions of use for chemicals, assuming workers don't have appropriate personal protective equipment, making very, very outlandish assumptions in order to deny certain chemicals and, you know, despite existing regulations from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, OSHA, that require PPE. So they would assume that, you know, this chemical is unsafe because, well, what if somebody just drank it? Well, I mean, that is an unreasonable assumption.

So what—you know, what steps is the EPA now taking to ensure that these risk evaluations for existing chemicals follow the best available science, properly evaluate risks, and I think just take common sense into account?

Mr. ZELDIN. We have to make sure that the decisions are tethered to actual science, to be considering the best available science, and making sure that that process is also more efficient inside of the agency. Rather than having the agency in conflict with each other where there is different opinions and different program offices, to have more consistency with that process is also key.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Yes, we will send you some of those strange stories that we have heard, too, where just common sense was thrown out the window, and I think you would be a bit surprised by it. Thank you for taking that on.

And again, as we work through the reauthorization of user fees under TSCA, are there additional implementation challenges for the agency with TSCA in the 2016 Lautenberg Amendment that the committee should address?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, I would say, as far as durability goes, any type of challenges, lessons learned that you lived through in the last administration, while we are addressing it now.

Pendulums swing, and you can write legislation thinking about where you want this process to be, where things look 5 years down the road or 10 years down the road, and if you have an opportunity to legislate a fixed based off of a lesson learned, we shouldn't be inheriting backlogs when we come in. We should be using the best available science. It should be tethered to actual science. So we are fixing it right now on our own at the agency. There could be an opportunity through legislation to make sure that it is more durable with whoever would be in charge of the agency in the future.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Yes, your feedback on that would be great.

And I am out of time. I yield back, thank you.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognizes the gentlelady from California, Ms. Barragán, for 5 minutes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund is a transformative program that will leverage private capital to support community-led projects that reduce pollution, create good-paying jobs, and lower energy costs. Now, several organizations applied and were competitively awarded funding to deploy to these economic development projects, just to have their money frozen.

You, Mr. Administrator, have made several accusations at awardees of the fund and former employees at EPA, but EPA's attorneys have not presented these accusations in court. A judge in a case brought by an award recipient asked EPA's lawyer from DOJ—and I am quoting—"Can you proffer to me the evidence of commission of a violation of Federal criminal law involving fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, or gratuity violations?"

And any one of those things—and the EPA lawyer responded—and I am quoting—"I cannot, Your Honor."

Just last week, The New York Times reported that the Department of Justice's investigation into the program is coming up empty, as well, stating that the investigation has, quote, "so far failed to find meaningful evidence of criminality by government officials."

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter a recent New York Times article entitled "Investigators See No Criminality by E.P.A. Officials in Case on Biden-Era Grants," as well as the transcript from the *Climate United* v. *Citibank* court hearing into the record.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Is that the full transcript?

Ms. BARRAGÁN. It is.

Mr. GRIFFITH. All right. Without objection?

So ordered.[1]

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[1] The article appears at the conclusion of the hearing. The court transcript has been retained in committee files and is included in the Documents for the Record at https://docs.house.gov/meetings/IF/IF18/20250520/118283/HHRG-119-IF18-20250520-SD817.pdf.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. OK, so I want to know what actual evidence you have of any fraud or wrongdoing. And I am talking about actual evidence of fraud or criminality, you know, documents or statements, hard proof, not just theories or hunches or policy disagreements.

So Administrator Zeldin, what evidence is there of any fraud or criminality, if it exists?

And why have you not provided it to us or to the Department of Justice?

Mr. ZELDIN. That is a great question, Congresswoman. So I will start with a Biden political appointee saying, "Now it is how to get the money out as fast as possible before the Trump administration comes in. It is like we are on the Titanic and we are throwing gold bars off the edge."

Ms. BARRAGÁN. OK, Mr. Zeldin——

Mr. ZELDIN. In 2024, a watchdog organization—

Ms. BARRAGÁN [continuing]. I am going to stop you for a second.

Mr. ZELDIN. Congresswoman——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. I am going to stop you for a second.

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. Do you want me to go through the evidence or not?

Ms. BARRAGÁN. I am going to reclaim my time. You mentioned gold bars.

Mr. ZELDIN. Do you want me to go through the evidence?

Ms. BARRAGÁN. You mentioned gold bars. That structure—one former employee that was secretly recorded, and it was not even talking about the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, is not evidence of fraud or wrongdoing.

So do you have something else, something better than that that is actual fraud or criminality?

Mr. ZELDIN. So, Congresswoman, I don't know—if you are going to allow me to go through the list, that is the first——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. I am talking about the Greenhouse——

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. Evidence. The second is in June of 2024——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. It is very specific.

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. A watchdog organization revealed that David Hayes, a Biden administration climate adviser previously on the board of the Coalition for Green Capital, rejoined the board as——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Administrator, did you say the name——

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. In 2023——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Hold on. I want to clarify the name. Did you say the name Jahi Wise? Is that who we are talking about?

Mr. ZELDIN. I did not.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. What is the name you said?

Mr. ZELDIN. David Hayes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. David Hayes. OK. Can you repeat that? I was trying to get the name.

Mr. ZELDIN. OK. I wish you——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. The name David Hayes.

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. Had about 30 minutes for me to go through the list.

But in June 2024, a watchdog organization revealed that David Hayes, a Biden administration climate advisor previously on the board of Coalition for Green Capital, rejoined the board in 2023 while the organization was applying for Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, which it ultimately received.

A March 4, 2025, media article identified a number of potential conflicts of interest regarding personnel at several grantees: Beth Bafford, Climate United Fund——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Zeldin, I am going to reclaim my time, because I want to make sure that we can have a meaningful exchange about some of the things that you are citing to.

You just mentioned two examples. Have you or EPA lawyers actually given that to the court, or used that or cited that as fraud or criminality?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, first off, the standard——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. It is a yes or no.

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Have you—you are a lawyer.

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. They have mentioned this? Which hearing was it at, because I don't see it in the transcript of that happening in the *United Climate* conversation. As a matter of fact, I am going to read to you the court transcript.

"Can you proffer any evidence that there was illegal or evidence of abuse or fraud, that any of this was improper or unlawful?"

EPA lawyer: "I am certainly not suggesting any of that was illegal or improper."

OK. Just yesterday, an EPA lawyer at the hearing suggested, "We are not accusing anybody of fraud."

Mr. ZELDIN. Did you understand——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. So——

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. That the evidence for EPA——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. So——

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. Is not to establish criminality at the agency?

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Well, you are alleging criminality. You did so in a Fox News interview, and you said that——

Mr. ZELDIN. But do you understand——

Ms. BARRAGÁN [continuing]. Is what this Greenhouse Reduction Fund was.

Mr. ZELDIN. In order to——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. You shouldn't be doing that if you cannot proffer the evidence.

Mr. ZELDIN. But Congresswoman——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. This is not Fox News. We are not going to just allow you——

Mr. ZELDIN. But Congresswoman, you——

Ms. BARRAGÁN [continuing]. Just make allegations here without that evidence.

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, if this isn't a media interview, you should allow me to go through the entire list, rather than just going through——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Well, fortunately, I only have 5 minutes, and I don't have time for you to filibuster.

Mr. ZELDIN. If you are truly interested in the entire list of all——

Ms. BARRAGÁN. I am asking for very——

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. The evidence——

Ms. BARRAGÁN [continuing]. Specific fraud——

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. Cutting me off and allow me to get through the list.

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentlelady's time has expired. The gentlelady yields back. Now I recognize the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Carter, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. Thank you, Administrator, for being here. We are really glad to see you, and thank you, and we are just delighted to have you in the position you are in, my friend.

I want to briefly mention a company in my district. Carbonade USA, a company I have met with that is on the cutting edge of turning carbon waste and PFAs into usable products, getting them out of our environment and into products such as sustainable aviation fuel.

Administrator, I personally delivered a letter to you and—from this company, and—with some questions surrounding EPA policies on PFAs, coal ash, et cetera. Can you commit, please, that you will take a look at this letter?

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, Congressman.

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. Thank you very much, and thank you.

And now moving on, under the Biden administration the EPA received over $100 billion in new supplemental funding through the IIJA and the IRA, the largest investment in the agency's history. The funding created or greatly expanded, one or the other, programs such as environmental justice grants under the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights, an office that was immediately tasked with managing a $3 billion grant portfolio.

In 2023, EPA Inspector General Sean O'Donnell testified here that the newly created office could be at particular risk for misspent funds, and that the IRA did not allocate sufficient oversight funding. Thankfully, President Trump and yourself are hard at work, clawing back funding and exposing waste, fraud, and abuse in the system. We cannot thank you enough for this, and American people cannot thank you enough for this. We are all taxpayers, regardless of which side of the aisle you are on. Calling back this waste, fraud, and abuse is important to all of us.

We have received pushback regarding EPA's right to terminate many of the grants awarded under the previous administration, particularly under environmental justice programs funded by the IRA. Again, I know that litigation about these decisions is ongoing, but is there anything you would like to clarify or share with Congress at this point in your understanding of EPA's authority to terminate these awards?

Mr. ZELDIN. We refuse to waste a penny of tax dollars. We are going to ensure that the zero-tolerance policy is implemented.

For some of the grants that have been terminated, it is important to note, as I stated earlier, that we are in the middle of a fiscal year. So as Congress has appropriated top-line numbers for different programs, EPA will fulfill our obligations under the law in making sure that money goes out that has to go out unless we hear otherwise from Congress as we are going through that fiscal year. But one thing that we have zero tolerance for is that there will be zero waste and abuse of even a penny of your constituents' tax dollars.

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. Not only do I applaud you for that, Administrator, but I commit to you that we will back you up in everything—way we can in that effort. So thank you for that.

As you know, members of this committee have expressed serious concerns about the previous administration's attempts to stand up the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, such as giving billions of dollars to organizations led by Democratic political allies to further hand out as they see fit. Initially, the previous administration also decided to use a financial agent to hold these funds, something that EPA has never done before.

To your knowledge, has that been done before?

Mr. ZELDIN. EPA has never done that before.

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. Has the way the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund programs been executed or structured made it more difficult to investigate these programs or to monitor the use of the funds in these programs?

Mr. ZELDIN. Absolutely, $20 billion sent to the bank to give to 8 pass-through entities. Many of those entities were brand new. In one case—Power Forward Communities, for example, received $100 in 2023. They got $2 billion in 2024.

In fact, EPA decided to put into the grant agreement that they would have 90 days to complete a training called "How to Develop a Budget." The Biden EPA felt like the recipient needed to complete a training on how to develop a budget—90 days to complete the training, yet they could start spending the $2 billion as that timeline was going on, even before they have learned how to develop a budget, intentionally reduced oversight in the way that the financial agent agreement was drafted, the grant agreement, the account control agreement. And when the money goes through the first pass-through, in many respects it goes through other pass-throughs, and EPA isn't even a party to any of those subgrantees.

So we are just starting to scratch the surface. There was a congresswoman who just asked the question, said, "What evidence do you have?" So we started going through the list, and they didn't want—I guess the other side of the aisle doesn't want me to go into any real list, one, two, three, four.

Do you want me—I mean, how much time do you have? Because if you want to yield a full 20 minutes, I am happy to go through all the specifics, and we are right here going through more. And I appreciate you asking, Congressman.

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. Well, and thank you again, Administrator, for being here today, and thank you for your work, and know that the American people support you and appreciate all of your efforts at the EPA. Thank you, my friend.

And I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Soto, for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOTO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here today.

You know, the Energy Star program is a popular program. It is there to make sure that we have energy efficiency certifications for dishwashers, for refrigerators, dryers, and home appliances. It has been around since 1992. You and I are in our mid-forties, so you were probably an early teenager in Long Island when this was coming out, and a lot of our parents over the years were able to buy those appliances, and then now we get to do that. It saved about 5 trillion kilowatt hours of electricity, about 500 billion in energy costs, and achieved 4 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas reductions.

This is merely providing info for consumers and encourages innovation. But it is not a mandate, right?

And we have—I have read some articles from the New York Times and others that the EPA plans to shut down this program. Is this true? Do you—is it your intention to ask Congress to shut down this program?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, Congress never created the program, so it—as far as the future of the program, you know, I start thinking of a program like LEED, and there's other examples of programs that are run outside of government. This program is an example of one that can be run outside of the government, and I have actually had multiple entities reach out to EPA over the course of the last few weeks because they want to take over Energy Star, which is a program that requires a big staff, a big taxpayer-funded staff, and a whole lot of tax dollars, a lot of tax dollars.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Secretary, have you proposed any rulemaking to try to adjust this program yet, or do you have any drafts of that, of what your proposal would look like?

Mr. ZELDIN. It doesn't require rulemaking.

Mr. SOTO. OK. So you believe you could do it just by an administrative order, then?

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, again, Congress—this is not a statutory obligation set by Congress.

Mr. SOTO. And then, you know, you served here for 8 well. So when we are talking about funds like the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, let's take you at your word. Let's say there are programs and funds that you want to claw back to examine and look at to make sure that tax dollars are being spent well. There is a distinct possibility those programs are going to be around for the next couple of years and not actually pulled out under this reconciliation package.

So I am trying to understand. What do you think the full extent of your power is to pull these back before it becomes impoundment, before it becomes unlawful? Can you give this committee some idea of what you intend over this next couple months to a year? When does it become impoundment and unlawful, versus reviewing programs that have already been funded by Congress?

Mr. ZELDIN. There are programs appropriated by Congress. We are in the middle of the fiscal year, and we are going to get money out that we are required to get out.

Mr. SOTO. And so—and you understand you have the power to be able to propose a budget, right? And if you want to cut programs, isn't that the proper way to do that, to—in your skinny budget and then in other budgets—like, you had proposed initially a 55 percent cut in the EPA budget. Isn't that the proper way to try to cut programs as you are reviewing to make sure money is being spent well?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, if we are—and here, we are here talking about the fiscal year 2026 budget. If it is something with regards to the current fiscal year, it wouldn't be part of the skinny budget for next year.

Mr. SOTO. I understand, but we are talking about—I am trying to understand your role as you see it, as Secretary, of where you can work with Congress on this, rather than doing things unilaterally, which you know from being here for many years is not the way we are supposed to do things.

You were a member of the Climate Solutions Caucus when you were here in Congress, and that was a bipartisan group that came together to try to develop bipartisan ways to deal with climate change. So I just want to make sure we are still on the same page here. Do you believe that climate change exists, and that it is human-caused, and that we have some obligation to do some things about it in a bipartisan fashion?

Mr. ZELDIN. Humans have contributed to it, but humans are not the only cause of it. Climate change has been around for a very long time, including preindustrialization. You could go back looking thousands, tens of thousands of years, and you will have the Earth at different temperatures.

Mr. SOTO. I understand, Mr. Secretary. So do we have an obligation to do something about the human-caused parts of it that you just recognized occurs?

Mr. ZELDIN. I think that there are individual responsibilities and collective responsibilities to be good stewards of the environment.

Mr. SOTO. And I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Weber, for 5 minutes.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Administrator, it is nice to see you again. I am glad to hear you got accolades for being a very well-versed lawyer and having spent 8 years here. I am surprised you would even set foot on this place again.

But listen, if you would like, Mr. Administrator, I can give you time to go back through that list where she was asking, actually, for some of those. Would you like to reiterate those for us?

Mr. ZELDIN. Sure. Thank you, Congressman. And this is one of the things that might not come as a shocker to you, but not everything the New York Times says is always true.

Mr. WEBER. Say it isn't so.

Mr. ZELDIN. So, you know, we have seen from the New York Times, Washington Post, Politico, they will write a story and they will say that there is no evidence of any wrongdoing, anything wrong with the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. No evidence?

We have expressed concern with regards to self-dealing and conflicts of interest, unqualified recipients, and reduced oversight. I started to get into some of the examples of self-dealing and conflicts of interest, which—by the way, the list is long of the leadership of a lot of these NGOs as former Biden and Obama officials, including prominent Democratic donors.

We have individuals who are serving in leadership capacities helping to create these programs, giving it to their former employers in some of the examples.

A government reviewer for Justice Climate Fund awarded $940 million, noting that only 3 of the nonprofit's 12 board members are independent from the organization and its coalition members. No mention of conflict of interest like if a family member benefitted from an entity receiving greenhouse gas reduction funding through the GCF.

Unqualified recipients. Power Forward Communities had reported a total of $100, even—in 2023. They get 2 billion in 2024.

CGC expended only 1.42 million in 2023 before receiving a $5 billion award.

Earlier we were talking to the chairman about Appalachian Community Capital receiving $500 million, and they never managed anywhere near that much money.

Concerns about the lack of oversight. You can ask me all sorts of basic questions about where the money goes once it goes to those eight prime recipients, and I should have an answer, but we don't.

As was pointed out with one of your colleagues, it is the first time that EPA is using a financial agent agreement in connection with one of these programs, the first time, actually, that it was ever used as a nonexchange grant program administered by the Federal Government across all agencies. Last-minute modifications to the grant agreement in ACA appeared intentional to reduce oversight, including amending the Account Control Agreement January 13th of 2025, just one week before the inauguration. Those amendments limited EPA's contractual rights to terminate for misconduct, short of a Federal crime, and limited EPA's contractual rights to assert exclusive control over funds in the Citibank accounts.

EPA determined that the amendments left EPA with insufficient authority to retain control of funds short of outright termination. Former EPA IG testifying to this subcommittee says the EPA's "pace of spending GGRF funds escalates not only the risk for fraud, but also the urgency for oversight." He said that the EPA's OIG would need to hire oversight professionals with specialized expertise to conduct sufficient oversight regarding the NCIF grants, in particular, not only to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse, but also to ensure that the IRA funds deliver the real environmental and human health benefits the public is paying for.

EPA's Acting IG, Nicole Murley, testified to the House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. The EPA was particularly concerned the GGRF program, including because the grant structure makes providing effective oversight challenging, and that EPA is concerned that there will be critical gaps in monitoring, accountability, and compliance in the GGRF.

Now, here is the thing. We are just scratching the surface. And I see your time is now running short, and I appreciate you allowing me to spend many minutes, but here is the catch. If you had 20 minutes that you were yielding to me right now, I would just keep going through the list and, no matter how much further down that list we get, the New York Times and the Washington Post and

Congressional Democrats will dig in even deeper, saying there is no evidence of anything.

The more time that you all give me to go further down the list, the more dug-in Democrats will say with their hands and their ears saying there is no evidence of any misconduct, there is no evidence of any way that there is anything wrong with any of this.

But we have a zero-tolerance policy for any waste and abuse, and we are not going to apologize.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman's time——

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Mr. Administrator, and thank you, Mr. Chairman. And so the sky is falling. So we appreciate you, Administrator.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Auchincloss, for 5 minutes.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Thank you, Chairman.

Welcome back, Administrator. I want to talk about PFAS. When you were a Member here, you were on the PFAS Action Force, yes? And I believe you voted for PFAS legislation, yes?

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, sir.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. My inclination is to think that is because you represent—you represented New York. And like Massachusetts, which I represent, both States have a pretty significant PFAS challenge: contaminated soil, contaminated water. You have contaminated DoD site in Calverton, right, former—in your former district, which I know you advocated for, and advocated to reduce PFAS levels there. So I was hopeful, and remain hopeful, that you can be a partner on PFAS remediation as Administrator.

Last week you announced that the EPA would rescind the drinking water standard for four PFAS chemicals and extend the compliance deadline for PFOA and PFOS by an additional 2 years, giving water systems 7 years to comply. I know you had indicated in previous testimony that for those two—that for PFOA and PFOS—you may actually consider lowering it from 4 to 2 parts per trillion, yes?

Mr. ZELDIN. For PFOA and PFOS we are maintaining the 4 parts per trillion MCL.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. So you won't consider lowering it to 2?

Mr. ZELDIN. With regards to the other four, we are going to be going through a rulemaking where, at the end of that process, that number will be determined. It could be 4——

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Right——

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. It could be 2, it could be something else.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Not the other four. I am talking about the two, PFOA and PFOs. I am just asking because you had said in previous testimony you could potentially bring it down to 2, but it sounds like you are going to keep it at 4. OK, extending the timeline to 7 years.

So now let's talk about the other four PFAS chemicals: PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO–DA, and then the hazard index mixture. So the EPA has its own science as well as up-to-date peer-reviewed science that says that these four PFAS have been linked to serious human health harms, even at very low levels. Why, instead of just retaining the MCLs for those four PFAS in accordance with the no-backsliding provision, why would you just rescind it?

Mr. ZELDIN. One of the things that I understand as Administrator of EPA is that every single decision that I will ever make I will probably get sued for, whether I say yes or no on anything. I have inherited some litigation, as well, including litigation on that rule that was finalized before I got there. There was a procedural error in the way in which they moved through the process on those four. I inherited that procedural error, and I am going to fix it.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. All right, so just reclaiming my time, then, so you are not contesting that there is good science that those four PFAS that you rescinded the rule for had been linked to serious human health harms. What you are asserting is that there are procedural errors under the APA?

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Under the APA. That means that you have to rescind—but you are committing that you are going to reissue a rule for those four PFAS.

Mr. ZELDIN. We are going to go through the rulemaking process on those four.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. I see. OK. Moving towards the budgeting aspect of this, the skinny budget proposal has a 90 percent reduction for the drinking water State revolving fund. Is that accurate?

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. How is New York and the 1.3 million New Yorkers who have PFAS in their water above the MCLs by the former rule—how are they going to get water treatment plants with a 90 percent cut? That is the primary funding mechanism for water infrastructure.

Mr. ZELDIN. So, great news, and it is something that Members of Congress who care about this issue would be very happy to hear. I would say the right word would be "inundated" of how many—how much outreach I have received over the course of the last few months from companies that have acquired new technology that they are very proud of in ways to far more efficiently than ever before be able to remove PFAS.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Can you name those new technologies? Because I have been doing this research, as well, and all of it costs money. So you are talking about, like, carbon filters? You are talking about electrochemical——

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. Companies, and I am happy to share with this committee the names of whoever has reached out to——

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Just give me a broad sense—just, like, the technology broadly. Like, give me an example of a technology that is going to be cheaper, faster, better that is not going to require money to update the water treatment facilities.

Mr. ZELDIN. It is going to cause a—it would require a small fraction, but we are in the process—I am not going to——

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Can you name a technology, though?

Mr. ZELDIN. What is that?

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Just the technology, broadly.

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes. So these are ideas that are being pitched that we are vetting right now. And I am not going to endorse any of it, but I would say that it is important to us——

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. You don't have to endorse it.

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. And the agency——

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Just name a technology that you have heard about.

Mr. ZELDIN. It is a treatment that breaks down the forever chemicals so that it is no longer a forever chemical. It is a treatment of the water that breaks down the chemical.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. If you are talking about electrochemical oxidation, you can do that for the very, very condensed landfill, but you can't do that at the scale of municipal water treatment facilities. It is way too diffuse. If that is what you are talking about, that is not the answer, which is why I am asking about other technologies, which you don't seem to be able to name.

I am going to yield back my time.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the chairman of the full committee, Mr. Guthrie, for 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thank you.

Thank you, Administrator Zeldin. Thanks for being back here amongst your colleagues. We welcome you back here to the—to Capitol Hill, and so happy you are in the position you are.

Last night you talked about new technologies moving forward. We had—last night we had a rule—a CR, Congressional Review Act that—before Rules, and it was if you are a major source and you had new technology or new operational procedures that lowered your standard, your emissions, then you could go into the area source. And we were accused of doing everything, of giving kids asthma and things like that, which is unfortunate, because what we want to do is we see new technology coming and we see the opportunities for people to improve, and that is what we want.

And I went to college in your home State, and right down the river from the ranking member. And when I was in the Hudson River in the 1980s, you couldn't swim in it—at least around 50 miles up from Manhattan at West Point—because it was contaminated. And the first time I remember hearing of the HHS Secretary—of course I had heard of his family—was he was the leader of Clean Up the Hudson River, the Riverkeepers, which was a group that I kind of followed because I was dismayed that such a beautiful piece of our country was in the position it was in because of industry. And we all agree, and there is nobody saying anywhere on our side of the aisle—and you are in the administration—that those types of things absolutely cannot happen. And so we are all there.

So now we are getting on to things you are trying to fix, where the small regulatory—it seems like small regulatory—that costs a fortune that you were talking about with PFAS and some other things we are seeing with our water plants.

But getting back to the Greenhouse Gas Fund, could you kind of just walk us through again? There was at least one, if not many, agents, nonprofit, that essentially was formed after the IRA, had $100 in his checking account, got $2,000—I mean $2 billion grant. So it seems like,"Here is the money, go form your thing," and get—instead of trying to invest, they talk about investing in known technologies to improve the environment. People were creating businesses who were politically connected to chase the money.

Could you talk about—you said if you had 20 minutes. You have, like, 2:45 if you want to talk more about it.

Mr. ZELDIN. Great, Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to continue to go through the list, and I would encourage anyone at home who doesn't want to hear it to put their finger in their ear, because we will keep going through specific examples that the New York Times says doesn't exist.

An EPA panel—this is the Biden EPA—the Biden EPA panel, reviewing the application for Power Forward Communities—that is the one that you referenced, they received $100 in 2023, and then they get 2 billion in 2024. The Biden EPA panel was questioning the salaries it planned to pay its executives, the salary structure for top officers. This is a quote from the Biden EPA: "The salary structure for top officers seems high for a nonprofit. Wondering if this could be a problem with public perception," the reviewer noted.

Another comment on a part of Power Forward Community's——

Mr. GUTHRIE. I hate to interrupt you, Secretary—I mean Administrator. Do you know what the top salary was?

Mr. ZELDIN. Thank you for asking.

Another comment, which was part of the application, a reviewer writes, "For such an important section, it was pithy, though not always in a good way. Many of the costs were just presented, but little or no explanation as to why they are reasonable. I would have preferred they omitted the travel discussion, explained why they need to pay the CEO $800,000, growing to $948,000 in year 7, and chief operating—operations officer $455,000 per year. It was reported that 22 of Power Forward Communities' employees were slated to earn more than $150,000."

Reviewers also criticized Power Forward Communities—this is the Biden EPA. The Biden EPA criticized Power Forward Communities for its lack of planning for "proactive oversight." So the Biden EPA is giving this entity that made $100 in 2023, $2 billion in 2024. And the Biden EPA is concerned that this entity isn't going to be able to conduct proper oversight. That is just an example of going down the list a bit more on one of the eight NGOs.

Mr. GUTHRIE. So the group didn't exist. They came into being in 2023, had $100 in their checking account, gets a $2 billion grant, and the CEO gets almost $900,000, and over a year will get over $900,000.

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, Chairman.

Mr. GUTHRIE. That is what your testimony is today.

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, Chairman.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thank you.

Well, we have about 6 seconds left, so I will yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Carter.

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Administrator, for being here. I represent the State of Louisiana, a State that knows intimately the cost of inaction and indifference when it comes to environmental protection. In Louisiana the environment is not some abstract policy issue, it is a matter of life and death, survival and displacement, health and chronic illness.

You mentioned in your opening statement—or in one of your statements, and I really appreciate it. I want to zero in on the fact that you said that you believe in coexistence, and ensuring that industry and healthy communities are able to work together. It is a message that I often send. But I also add to that the importance of making sure for industry to ever survive, you have to have healthy communities. Would you agree with that?

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes.

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. We have to make sure that individuals have clean water, clean air, and they are being listened to because they are the ones who are frontline. Would you agree with that, as well?

Mr. ZELDIN. Of course.

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. And the past few years, under the previous administration, the previous Administrator took my invitation seriously and visited with me in Louisiana to meet with industry and individuals, to meet with people like Rise St. James, to meet with people like the Bucket Brigade, to meet with communities like the Concerned Citizens for a Better St. John, and industry, as well. Sir, would you be willing to accept such an invitation to work closely, to listen, and to be a part of solutions?

Mr. ZELDIN. I love any good excuse to come to Louisiana.

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. I will take you up on it. We got lots more, too, so thank you. Thank you very much. That is important, because we need to demonstrate not just in word but also in deed that coexistence begins with and is paramount with having safe communities, because industry can't survive if it doesn't have people to work in these facilities. So I thank you for that.

I want to jump to just—let's talk a little bit about resilience and disaster preparedness, specifically the grant your agency canceled that was designed to increase in my district resiliency, flooding, and extreme heat. One such was the community organization Stay Ready NOLA, for creating a solar-powered resilience facility in New Orleans to house linemen and other first responders in the aftermath of hurricanes. It would also provide the surrounding communities a safe place to cool off, charge their phones, and receive supplies.

This project is a direct response to lessons learned from Hurricane Ida in 2021, where parts of my district lost power for several weeks. The deaths that occurred from Hurricane Ida were not just because of flooding or storm surge, but the elderly and sick residents overheating without power, without air conditioning during the scorching summer days in following the storm.

Stay Ready NOLA executive director Neil Morris is here today. I want to take a moment to recognize him and the incredible work that he does in our community to build this vital facility.

When these grants were pulled, you didn't just cancel paperwork, you undermined lifesaving mitigation efforts in vulnerable communities. Dillard University is another one of those perfect examples of an HBCU that had funding to retrofit its facilities to serve as community resilience hubs during emergencies—was also terminated. Mr. Administrator, do you commit to restoring these grants after review?

Mr. ZELDIN. So—well, that commitment I am not going to make. However, I am happy to work with you to be able to identify any portion of the grant where there would be alignment with the administration. We can work together, our teams can work together.

As far as the entire grant, one of the differences of opinion in administration priorities and policies from the Biden administration to the Trump administration is that we believe that money should get spent—if there is a dollar to get spent in the name of remediating an environmental issue, the dollar should get spent on directly remediating the environmental issue, not giving money to——

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. OK, I hate to cut you off. I got 36 seconds. I want to ask you one final question.

Your office's termination letter to Stay Ready NOLA and their project to build a hub for first responders stated, "Objectives of the awards are no longer consistent with EPA funding priorities." How is assisting linemen and other—providing others—providing life-saving services in the aftermath of a natural disaster no longer consistent with your agency's priority?

Mr. ZELDIN. So the difference is that the—at the Trump EPA we do not agree with spending the money by giving it—a pass-through grant to an entity where even a portion of the funding is used to prop up an NGO as opposed to spending it on directly remediating an environmental issue.

So, again, I am happy to sit down with you. I know that there are a number of grants——

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. Yes, sir.

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. On top of just the two that you referenced inside of your district. I am happy to go through the entire list with you.

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. I would love to visit with you. Thank you for being here today. And I am going to accept your offer to come to Louisiana to visit with these stakeholders to talk about these individual grants, whether it is Dillard University or any other that is out there that have been so critically important to the people of Louisiana, both Republican and Democrat and the like.

Environmental issues, environmental justice, environmental concerns don't have color, don't have race, don't have party. They only have people. So thank you very much.

And my time is up, and I yield, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the gentlelady from Iowa, Mrs. Miller-Meeks, for her 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Thank you, Chairman Guthrie and Ranking Member Tonko, for holding this important hearing today. And I also want to thank Administrator Zeldin for appearing before the subcommittee.

Wonderful to see you again, sir.

The EPA under past administrations took a one-size-fits-all approach that buried farmers, energy producers, and small businesses in red tape. The result was not necessarily better environmental outcomes but delayed projects, increased costs for consumers, and real harm to rural communities like those in Iowa.

This administration has rightly set a new tone focused on cutting unnecessary regulations, streamlining permitting processes, and rolling back out-of-touch, impractical, unworkable, and expensive climate mandates that ignored energy demand and local economic realities.

As we consider the EPA's budget, I want to see a shift in focus, fewer dollars spent on expanding Federal control and more on empowering local solutions, science-based policy, and regulatory certainty. That is how we deliver real environmental progress without sacrificing economic opportunity.

Your Powering the Great American Comeback Initiative emphasizes permitting reform as a key pillar. Given the lengthy environmental reviews that have delayed critical infrastructure projects across the country, what specific steps is EPA taking to streamline permitting processes while maintaining appropriate environmental safeguards?

Mr. ZELDIN. There are some in government who are trying to get to the answer of no, looking for any excuse to say no and to gum up the works. We want to be able to get to yes. We want to be able to work with people and companies out there, want—that want to invest in communities, that want to invest in the American economy.

Right now, for example, in Arizona, Taiwan Semiconductors are trying to get a permit through to make a major investment inside of Maricopa County. When I meet with elected officials in Arizona, ranging from the Democrat Governor or the two Democratic Senators or Republican Members of the House, it doesn't matter what side of the aisle you are on. Their ask of EPA is that we work with them and TSMC to try to get that approval done as quickly as possible.

And there are so many examples all across the entire map where there were applications that were stalled that we have been able to implement permitting reform without waiting for a bill from Congress. Just do it ourselves. Where we were gumming up the works, we are no longer gumming up the works.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Thank you. Biofuel production helps us meet our growing energy needs, supports our farmers and it creates, most importantly, American jobs with American-made energy and supports our America First agenda, helping to create manufacturing jobs that can't be offshored.

The proposed 2026 Renewable Volume Obligation, or RVO rule, was due last November and just went to OMB last week. Every day of delay creates unnecessary uncertainty for Iowa's farmers, biofuel producers, and workers. Industry and ag leaders have asked for at least 5.25 billion gallons for biomass-based diesel and 15 billion gallons for ethanol. We can produce it, we can make it homegrown, and it fits in with energy dominance.

When do you expect the EPA to release the proposed RVO rulemaking?

Mr. ZELDIN. Very soon.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Great, thank you. We look forward to that.

Iowa leads in E15 retail availability, yet we still face unnecessary barriers each summer due to the outdated volatility rules. Consumers lose access to lower-cost, cleaner-burning fuel just when gas prices rise. Can you provide a timeline for EPA's final action to ensure permanent, year-round E15 access nationwide, voluntary?

And will you support this fix?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, Congress almost passed this last December. That is the most durable, simplest way to answer your question and to resolve it.

To leave it to EPA, you have all sorts of different asks and steps in the process as you go throughout the entire year. We have made a number of decisions since I was confirmed at the end of January, heeding the asks from you and your colleagues in Congress as well as the Governors.

We are currently—we are in the middle of the summer driving season, where the emergency waiver that was issued before May 1 is something that we have to revisit every 3 weeks or so, and I just did that again yesterday. And that process is not as simple. It is not as quick, and it is going to require more bandwidth for you, it is going to require more bandwidth for me at the agency until and unless there is any type of statutory change.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. OK, Mr. Chair, I have some questions that I am going to submit for the record on the Clean Power Plan 2.0 and on WOTUS and small refinery exemptions that I will be submitting for the record.

And I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Thank you very much. The gentlelady yields back. I now recognize the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Menendez, for 5 minutes.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you, Chairman.

As many others have emphasized today, the EPA's main purpose as established by Congress is to protect the environment and public health. Today I want to talk to you about the importance of managing contaminated sites.

As you may know, New Jersey's industrial legacy presents environmental challenges in our communities. That is why the Brownfields Program is particularly important in my district. Just a few weeks ago, this committee held a bipartisan hearing on its successes, and Mayor Bollwage from the City of Elizabeth testified to the program's importance. Elizabeth leveraged Brownfields funding to convert formerly contaminated sites into affordable housing and other projects that enhance community well-being and economic development.

And we heard from Republican witnesses at that hearing that this program has a significant return on investment. For every Federal dollar spent there is an average $20 return in economic activity. So we are really proud of the work that Elizabeth has done, and all my colleagues here have success stories from their districts, as well.

So Mr. Zeldin, yes or no, given the success of and bipartisan support for the Brownfields Program, can you commit to this committee that it will not be impacted by budget cuts?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, ultimately, the funding level is going to be something that is decided between Congress and the administration. The Brownfields Program, as you point out, is a very amazing, great, successful program that should be a source of strong bipartisan support and pride. And the success stories all across America are overwhelming.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Correct, and it is a bipartisan success story that, as we heard in that hearing, so many good projects across the country. So funding is part one.

Part two—again, yes or no—can you commit to me that the program staff will be maintained, as it is a bipartisan priority for this committee?

Mr. ZELDIN. You said the program staff?

Mr. MENENDEZ. That is correct.

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, the—it is important to make sure that the Brownfields Program is fully staffed to be able to extraordinarily accomplish its mission.

Mr. MENENDEZ. OK. And while I hope that is true, I am concerned about some recent EPA actions. My office has heard from Groundwork Elizabeth, a nonprofit promoting environmental resilience, education, and youth leadership in Elizabeth, that a $500,000 Brownfields grant was paused without clarity on when it—when that—it might be reinstated. That was a job training grant to help students access stable, good-paying environmental work while also giving back to their community.

And we have heard numerous stories about grant cancellations at other EPA programs in addition to the ongoing layoffs of staff at EPA who provide technical assistance across EPA programs.

So while we are addressing industrial pollution, I would like to discuss the Superfund program. There are over 100 of those sites in New Jersey, including 6 in the district that I represent. My constituents in the Ironbound section of Newark live near a former factory that manufactured 700,000 gallons of Agent Orange, and reportedly dumped bad batches directly into the Passaic River. Ensuring that sites like this one are robustly monitored, managed, and remediated is integral to the well-being of families in my district and a priority for me and the people that I represent. That is why I am profoundly concerned that you are proposing to cut Superfund's budget by over $250 million.

So my question to you is, for a family that lives in the Ironbound section and in close proximity to a Superfund site, what would you say to a mother who is concerned for her family's health and well-being to justify why you are cutting funding that could protect her children from carcinogens and other health risks associated with contaminated sites?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, with regards to Superfund, which is another very successful, important program, I have had the opportunity to visit Superfund sites inside of New Jersey since becoming Administrator, and I look forward to coming back.

Our goal is to be able to successfully delist all or parts of these sites. As it relates to your question, Congress imposed large taxes in the IIJA and the IRA to finance the Superfund program. As it says inside of the skinny budget, between these 1.6 billion in taxes estimated to be available in 2026 and litigation recoveries from responsible parties, that is why there is a need for an additional funding for the Superfund cleanup, as reflected in the skinny budget.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Correct, and—but that—those funds were intended to supplement and accelerate Superfund remediation, right?

Because what I always talk about is today there are families living near these Superfund sites, right, and they don't have the luxury of waiting. And so we need to do this work as quickly as possible. But between the funding cuts and staffing cuts, we are concerned that the work is not going to get done in a timely manner or as fast as it could if we had a whole-of-government approach. And that is why I really hope that the EPA will continue to partner with Congress so we can make sure that all of our communities have the healthy outcomes that they deserve.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I thank him for being efficient with his time. We are running out of it. And I now recognize the gentleman from Alabama, Mr. Palmer, for 5 minutes.

And I will remind everybody that the witness has to leave at approximately 12:30, so we are trying to hurry through.

Mr. Palmer.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Administrator Zeldin, for being here.

I am, like some of my colleagues, concerned about some of the decisions that the EPA has made, but I am looking at it from a little different perspective. For instance, there was a rule on lime dust emissions that was put forward by the EPA last summer. Even though their own—EPA's own scientific assessment said that emissions from lime manufacturing industry were already acceptable with an ample margin of safety, this rule would have—would impose $2 billion on the industry, which gets passed on in multiple ways. Most people think of lime in the context of the manufacturer of cement products, but it is also used to enhance soil quality. There are a number of other uses for it.

Administrator Zeldin, are—is the EPA now taking a look at some of these rules that I think have gone outside of what is necessary, and imposing an unnecessary cost on our economy and on people?

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, Congressman. Yes, we have received various concerns regarding NESHAPs, including regulations not squarely grounded in the statutory authority compliance costly to industry deadlines for compliance with some requirements might be too short. Some of the rules may disproportionately impact small businesses.

Questions exist regarding the science underlying certain standards. Test data used in calculating standards may not fully reflect variability and/or real-world operations. Questions exist regarding the appropriateness of setting certain technology-based standards rather than health-based standards. And questions exist regarding the appropriateness of setting certain numeric emissions limits rather than work practice standards.

Mr. PALMER. I am glad you mentioned the technology-based standards, because it is—also involves the particulate matter standards.

Now, some of the things that EPA has imposed on people require what I jokingly refer to as black box technology. And people say, "Well, what is in the box?" Nothing. That technology doesn't exist yet. And it imposes enormous costs on the economy but also on city governments that gets passed on to consumers. So I am hoping that the EPA will take a more scientific approach to some of these rules, and—but also go back and look at the science behind some of the rules that have been imposed by the past administration and possibly consider repealing those.

There is something else that I want to talk with you about that I think is really critical right now, and that is our ability to have access to rare earth elements. China controls 94 percent of the rare earth refining. They have the largest deposit of rare earth elements in the world. The United States, I think, is seventh on that list. And we are finding ourselves in a position where there is not a single major refinery for rare earth elements in the Western Hemisphere. There's only nine in the world. Eight are in China, one is in Malaysia.

I think that we are at a point where we are going to have to look at permitting, look at the regulations in order for the United States to catch up, to secure the supply chain that we need. And there are multiple opportunities to do this. You can find rare earth elements in coal ash, you can find them in things like discarded hard drives. But we need to be able to mine, process, and refine our own rare earth element supply because it is not just important for our economy, it is important for our national security. I would like your comments on that.

Mr. ZELDIN. Congressman, this is one of the issues that are on the plate, the priority list, for the National Energy Dominance Council. EPA has some equities. The Department of the Interior has equities. The Department of Energy has equities, the Department of Commerce.

There is an opportunity here for us to be able to not just benefit economically, but I would also look at it as a matter of national security for us not to have to rely on other nations at a moment where it would matter most in the future to make sure that we are prepared here domestically. So I think it is an important—it is a very important priority for the National Energy Dominance Council and for the Trump administration at large.

Mr. PALMER. Well, I am very grateful to have you in the position that you are in, Administrator Zeldin.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Landsman, for 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. LANDSMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to jump into waste, fraud, and abuse. It is very important to you, yes?

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes.

Mr. LANDSMAN. OK. The Government Accountability Office lays out a whole host of changes that would get at waste, fraud, and abuse, and I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the GAO reports for the EPA.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Do you have a date on it, or——

Mr. LANDSMAN. I think——

Mr. GRIFFITH [continuing]. All of them?

Mr. LANDSMAN. Yes, I think we are submitting all of the reports.

Mr. GRIFFITH. All right. If you can, give me the specific reports, because I think there is thousands of GAO reports over the years on the EPA. But just give me the date, and we will——

Mr. LANDSMAN. Yes, we will get you the dates.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Thank you.

Mr. LANDSMAN. We went back and forth, but I think it was——

Mr. GRIFFITH. OK, that is fine.

Mr. LANDSMAN. No problem.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Give us the date, so we can get that into the record properly.

Without objection.

Mr. LANDSMAN. To the Chair's point, there are so many, and so I am going to mention a few: strengthen controls over the EPA Administrators and associates' travel—obviously, there is the possibility—in fact, they found waste, fraud, and abuse there; implement controls to prevent unauthorized access to the EPA facilities; implement comprehensive fraud risk management framework.

Have all of the GAO report recommendations on waste, fraud, and abuse been implemented?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, the ones that you are referencing I have had meetings on all. We have been addressing all. For example, when we were doing the COVID-era return to work inside of our headquarters here in DC, it was easier to know who was coming into the building because they have to badge in. But in regions, there are regional offices where they didn't have to badge in or, in some cases, one person is badging in on an elevator and there's seven other people on the elevator. So we have been working on addressing that with all the regional offices.

Travel contracts, vending, real estate consolidation——

Mr. LANDSMAN. But all the GAO report—the recommendations you have implemented, yes or no?

Mr. ZELDIN. As the Chair points out—pointed out that there is—that there are a lot of reports, I would—we have been implementing a ton.

Mr. LANDSMAN. It is just—it is so important to me because the GAO reports focus entirely on waste, fraud, and abuse, and it is a huge issue for you, it is a huge issue for me, and my frustration has been why the focus hasn't been at least significantly on the GAO reports.

To that end, are you currently under investigation by the GAO, is the EPA?

Mr. ZELDIN. I am not aware of an investigation by the GAO.

Mr. LANDSMAN. The GAO is currently investigating the EPA.

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, I—when you say "investigating," what are you referencing?

Mr. LANDSMAN. The GAO has opened up an investigation on the EPA that was public. That is my understanding. But you are saying no?

Mr. ZELDIN. No, no, I am not aware of an investigation——

Mr. LANDSMAN. OK, the—

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. By the GAO.

Mr. LANDSMAN. The $5 billion that you have cut from the EPA, 55 percent, that is not included in GAO reporting, correct?

Mr. ZELDIN. This is a—we are talking about a fiscal year 2026 number that is now going through the legislative process. I wouldn't anticipate that that would be something GAO would be looking at, but I can't speak for GAO.

Mr. LANDSMAN. Yes. So again, the GAO focuses on waste, fraud, and abuse. The $5 billion cut in the EPA does not go under that category.

We have in southwest Ohio the second-largest research and development facility. The administration has proposed cutting 75 percent of ORD, putting at risk about 400 jobs in our district. Would you be willing to either come to the district or sit down with me and let us make the argument to keep these jobs over the course of the next couple of weeks? I mean, it is just so—it is so many people.

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, there is—so I have been visiting all the regions, all of the labs. I have been to 17 States, and we are going to keep going. So if—are you saying that you have a lab in your district?

Mr. LANDSMAN. Yes.

Mr. ZELDIN. I am happy to come visit that lab.

Mr. LANDSMAN. Yes or no, did the ORD play an important role in determining that the air was OK to breathe in East Palestine?

Mr. ZELDIN. The EPA has multiple programmatic offices that were involved——

Mr. LANDSMAN. They played a huge role. Did the ORD play a big role in Deepwater Horizon; Flint, Michigan water crisis; California water fires?

Mr. ZELDIN. Again, the—we have multiple programmatic offices, and the scientific and research——

Mr. LANDSMAN. They played a huge——

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. Functions, and the statutory obligations are all going to be fulfilled——

Mr. LANDSMAN. They played a huge role. Cutting ORD so significantly will be devastating.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the long-suffering gentleman from Texas, Mr. Pfluger.

Mr. PFLUGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good to see you, Administrator. Congratulations. What a breath of fresh air. And to my colleague's question, will you come visit? Thank you for saying yes to—whether it is the gentleman from Louisiana or any other State. We couldn't get a single visit in west Texas from the previous Administrator, and we desperately needed it because of the overreach.

And what you saw was the Supreme Court of the United States struck down the overreach of agencies like the previously run EPA in their *Loper Bright* decision. That was so important when you are talking about quad O, B, and C. And what the other side told me for 4 straight years is, oh, we are working with industry. No, there was no collaboration with industry. And I want to thank you for saying yes and agreeing to go visit a lab or whatever it is.

And by the way, the money-laundering scheme that we saw in the previous administration that sent $2 billion to that company, who was the CEO of that company?

Mr. ZELDIN. Power Forward Communities? I will get that for you.

Mr. PFLUGER. Not meant to be a trick question. I just thought it might have been a gentlelady from Georgia.

Mr. ZELDIN. Sure. The CEO of Power Forward Committee—Communities was Tim Mayopoulos, who was also CEO of Fannie Mae during the Obama administration.

Mr. PFLUGER. OK. Moving to what I want to talk about, quad O, B, and C, and the subpart W reporting included in your 31 points, thank you for that. We have to compete with China.

We want the EPA to make sure that our environment is protected. There is no argument whatsoever there. Can you give us a status on what the quad O series for new and existing and also the subpart W will get to? Because this is not workable for our producers that are especially small scale.

Mr. ZELDIN. Both reconsiderations were announced on March 12. We will be following the Administrative Procedure Act on both, working to get this work finalized this year. It will include a public comment period. I will not prejudge outcomes of either rulemaking before, and we will follow our obligations under the law in going through that rulemaking, Congressman.

Mr. PFLUGER. Thank you. And I will advocate for reality. We were very pleased that Mr. Mason, the region 6 director, came and visited the Permian Basin just before your visit. I would like to invite you again. But one of the things we talked about was, especially with regards to methane, the monitoring that is being done. And to incentivize that good behavior, we have reduced the intensity of methane in the Permian Basin by almost 30 percent, and that has happened in the last 10 to 15 years, while also increasing the amount of barrels produced from 1 million barrels a day back in 2010 to 6 million barrels a day. And that—the complexity that goes on to reduce that intensity, we want to work with you. I encourage that work.

Do you have any ideas on where—the previous Administrator was looking at the Permian Basin in general to place into a state of nonattainment with regards to the ozone reporting. Are there any updates on that for us? This was something that interjected a lot of chaos into that region.

Mr. ZELDIN. It is a very important pillar. It is a very important pillar of the Powering the Great American Comeback Initiative to advance cooperative federalism. Part of that with the reorg is creating an Office for State Air Partnerships inside of the Office of Air and Radiation. We have approved 25 State implementation plans, including 16 that were backlogged from the last administration. We are working through.

These nonattainment requests and issues, including inside the Permian Basin, we want to be a partner at EPA for Texas and the local community.

Mr. PFLUGER. Well, thank you. It was very apparent to my constituents that the EPA had become weaponized. And working in partnership is exactly the key word. We appreciate that.

And again, I will say it very clearly. Not a single person in my district wants—in fact, we are true conservationists, we have lived there for a long time. Water is something that is very important to us.

I will yield the last 30 seconds to you for any rebuttals or followups that you needed to make from previous questioning.

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, a couple days after our regional Administrator, Scott Mason, was with you in your district, I was there and we— I thought it was a very productive, helpful visit meeting with the community.

I think it is important for whoever is the EPA Administrator to come, for them to include that as part of, you know, being familiar with how EPA regulations out of Washington, DC, end up impacting realities on the ground. So it was an important early stop to make. I was happy to do it, and I am grateful for your invite and Senator Cruz's invite for that trip.

Mr. PFLUGER. Well, thank you. We want to work in partnership. We have to compete with China. We have to compete around the world, which means that we can't have a weaponized agency. Thank you for your leadership.

And I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. Now I recognize the gentlelady from North Dakota, Mrs. Fedorchak, for her 5 minutes of questioning.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Mr. Zeldin, it is great to meet you and to have you here. I represent the entire State of North Dakota, and North Dakota feeds and fuels the world. And we—so your agency has a huge impact on the people of my State.

So first I want to say thank you for what you are doing already. One of the first actions I took in this role was to write the President and Secretary Burgum to ask them to repeal 20 burdensome rules and regulations from the previous administration, and you are well on your way to doing that.

You have outlined a number of grave abuses from the last administration, and I would say one of the gravest abuses was the impact the past administration had on our power sector. I come from the regulatory side of things. I was most recently the president of the National Utility Regulators Association, and in that role I worked hard to get the last administration to be reasonable on their 111(d) rules. They completely ignored everything we said. They ignored the power—the grid operators.

And that rule was completely disconnected from reality. And even though it is being pulled back, it had grave consequences on our power grid, and today we are short—are dangerously short— of having enough power to meet demand because of that agency's overreach in the last administration. So thank you for your commitment to correcting that and getting us back on track.

Mr. ZELDIN. Now, Congresswoman, first off I want to congratulate you and the people of North Dakota for what was a massive upgrade in their representation here in the House. Congratulations on your election.

We inherited a lot. I often get asked what the biggest surprise— or what was most shocking once I was confirmed as Administrator, and I would say it is—it was surprising how much we were able to do at once. And we have heard your calls for action at the agency, and we want to tackle it all at the same time. We don't even want to pace ourselves.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Good. A couple of things. There is about three things I wanted to mention that are really important to my State that you are already working on.

You announced last week that you proposed to approve my State's proposal to manage the Coal Combustion Residuals Permit Program in lieu of the Federal CCR. That is a huge decision. Thank you for that. When—any sense of when that—what the timeline will be to finalize that?

Mr. ZELDIN. As quickly as possible, following the law. As last week's letter indicated, the application that was submitted is complete, and we are moving through that process over the course of these next couple months.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Excellent. Thank you for that.

The farmers across my State are really significantly impacted by Waters of the U.S. In North Dakota we have something somewhat unique. It is called the Prairie Pothole Region, and that area creates a lot of uncertainty for our farmers and producers, particularly as it relates to the kind of whiplash of changing regulations. So will you commit to working with North Dakota farmers and ranchers to make sure that your WOTUS rule rewrite accurately reflects the unique wetlands in my State?

Mr. ZELDIN. Absolutely, Congresswoman. It is imperative that we get it right. And we don't believe it is going to be hard to get it right. We are going to follow the simple, prescriptive, straightforward decision in *Sackett*. We want a definition that all 50 States are able to get behind. Right now that is not the case. And we want to make sure that everyone in your State knows whether or not what is on their land is a Water of the United States subject to Federal regulation or not. We want them to be able to know that without having to hire an attorney or a consultant, without having to pay somebody in order to tell that to them.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Excellent. And let's hope it is not a trickle of water that is only there at certain parts of the year.

I hope—I have heard from our electric utilities throughout the State about the negative impacts of the Biden MATS rule. This regulation targets critical coal units across the country—again, threatening grid reliability, one of our most important issues that we must address. I was pleased to learn that EPA is considering a 2-year compliance exemption while you write the MATS rule. This goes at something I am working on legislatively, that we can't be forcing generation offline at a time when demand is increasing. As you work on that rule, will you work with me and this committee to get it right?

Mr. ZELDIN. Absolutely, Congresswoman. And it is important to note that there was a—there were mercury and air toxic standards before this most recent rule was put into place. So some people tried talking about it as if this recent MATS rule, if it went away, that there is just no mercury and air toxic standards, and that is just—that is not accurate.

As we go through the reconsideration, we want to get it right. We want to—we will have a public comment period. We want to work with Members of Congress. We want to reach the right decision.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Excellent. Yes, the rule had already been complied with, and at great expense. So thank you very much. I appreciate it. I hope you will come visit North Dakota this summer.

Mr. ZELDIN. I look forward to it.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentlelady yields back. Now we are at waiveons. We may have a member of the committee come back. Administrator Zeldin has indicated he will give us some additional time. But what we are going to do, by agreement, is we are going to have 3 minutes per person waive-on both sides, and we will try to get through everybody with a 3-minute rule for those who have waived on. We appreciate it.

Ms. Castor of Florida is now recognized for 3 minutes.

Ms. CASTOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Mr. Administrator, to our committee. Thank you for being here.

You know, working families and small business owners across the country are really facing an affordability squeeze, and I am very concerned with the actions out of EPA and others across the administration on—it is just you have added on to their pain, and they are really feeling it in their wallets. Utility companies in at least 19 States have hiked rates as much as $40 per month just over the past few months.

You know, one important way that families save money is energy-efficient appliances. In my neck of the woods families are rebuilding after Hurricanes Helene and Milton. They are replacing a lot of their appliances. And it was just so painful to hear you announce that the Energy Star, this popular program that certified energy efficiency of home appliances for more than three decades, was coming to an end. That distinct blue label that is recognized by Americans has just been a godsend to them. And the data shows that this voluntary program has saved $500 billion in utility bills for Americans and prevented a whole lot of pollution.

So this Energy Star was codified by Congress in 2005. It is the law. So how do you justify an announcement that—how do you justify that you have the authority to end this and these important consumer savings?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, for one, we don't believe that this—that Energy Star would cease to exist if the Government wasn't propping it up. There are plenty of programs outside of government. As I referenced to one of your colleagues earlier, the LEED program is another example. Over the course of the last couple of weeks, we have had all different kinds of outreach to EPA of different entities——

Ms. CASTOR. But why take an anticonsumer——

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. Nonprofits that want to run it.

Ms. CASTOR. Why take an anticonsumer bent that is in violation of the law at a time when people really need those dollars back into their wallets?

How can you—let me ask it this way: Who has pressed from outside the agency to end these consumer savings under Energy Star? Which organizations and interest groups and polluters have pushed for this?

Mr. ZELDIN. As you all know, Energy Star requires a lot of taxpayer-funded salaried positions, as well as a lot of tax dollars. And the Government——

Ms. CASTOR. What is the budget for Energy Star, do you know?

Mr. ZELDIN. I believe about 19 million or so, on top of——

Ms. CASTOR. But if you measure that against the $500 billion——

Mr. ZELDIN [continuing]. The 5——

Ms. CASTOR [continuing]. Saved for American families, isn't that an important investment, especially when it is consistent with the law passed by Congress?

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, I would happily and eagerly find out from inside of the agency how they had previously calculated that figure, because I anticipate that they are taking credit for a heck of a lot more than they should.

Mr. GRIFFITH. All right, the——

Ms. CASTOR. I yield back my time.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentlelady yields back. Now I recognize Mr. Evans of Colorado, who is a member of the subcommittee, so I recognize him for 5 minutes.

Mr. EVANS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Administrator Zeldin, for coming today. My first question to you—you know I come from Colorado. Actually, the northeast part of the State, the Denver-Julesburg basin area, Weld County. And one of the issues that we are running into up there is we are in the front range ozone nonattainment area for Colorado along the front range.

But when you look at the constellation of monitors in some of the major oil- and gas-producing areas, that county is actually in ozone attainment. But geographically, we are getting looped into the nonattainment area, which has a really, really negative impact on the over 80 percent of oil from Colorado that comes from my area and the 50 percent of natural gas that comes from my area.

So I am curious on hearing your thoughts about how we can work together to make sure that we are promoting energy dominance and working in places like Colorado, where a lot of our producers are facing some of those challenges from being geographically looped into the nonattainment area, even though they themselves are in attainment.

Mr. ZELDIN. I think that the Colorado example highlights how there shouldn't be a one-size-fits-all Federal answer, that we should be working closely with Colorado on their State implementation plan, that the State implementation plan shouldn't have any unnecessary pieces, asks, demands from the Federal Government. It should be simple and straightforward to allow Colorado to be able to come into compliance and have that partnership with the EPA and the Trump administration. That is something I have communicated to your Governor.

I also don't believe that Colorado should be a victim of its own success in that so many businesses and people want to move to Colorado. Anyone who flies into Denver airport, it might look different than when you were there 2 weeks earlier because there is that much activity of people and businesses moving to the area, and you all shouldn't be punished for that.

Mr. EVANS. Thank you. Kind of along those same lines, not being punished for some of those things, one of the other areas where it really feels like we are being punished is interstate transportation of a lot of these different pollutants.

For instance—you know, we have satellites, we can track this stuff—there is pollution in Colorado that originates from China. And if you took out just the contribution of Chinese pollutants along the Colorado Front Range, the entire Front Range would be an ozone attainment. And so talking about programs like the 179(b) waiver for international transport or exceptional events for things like wildfires, what are ways that we can work together, to your point about making sure that places like Colorado aren't punished for events that are outside of their control and that are pushing us over that attainment limit?

Mr. ZELDIN. I agree with you, Congressman. We have taken down the 179(b) guidance. It is—it shouldn't be on our website anymore. This is an ask that has also come in from Arizona, it has come in from Utah. These international impacts are resulting in a situation where some are saying, "Hey, listen, if we didn't have—if we went zero emission, if we took every car off the road, that—we still would not be able to come into attainment." And obviously, we are not doing something right in a—as a process if a State can take every car off the road and go zero emission and still not be in attainment, and they—there are serious consequences for EPA determining that they are in that serious nonattainment. So that is very important.

As far as exceptional events, that was part of our March 12 announcement, to be reconsidering that rule. We need to understand that Western States, in doing forest management, need flexibility to be able to keep their people safe and shouldn't have fear that, by doing responsible practices of forest management, that they are going to be penalized for it.

Mr. EVANS. Thank you. And then one final question for you along those same lines, not being penalized for things outside of your control. State data from Colorado says 50 percent of the ozone along our Front Range does not originate from things that are under Colorado's control. But one of the impacts that being in a nonattainment zone has on consumers in Colorado is we are mandated in the summer months to be—to buy reformulated gas.

I just sat down with all of my gas station suppliers, who said that that is a $300 million impact on consumers being forced to purchase a product that is 40 cents more per gallon, that has a 0.1 part per billion impact on Front Range ozone. In the last 30 seconds, can you just talk about how we can work together to protect consumers from things like the reformulated gas mandate?

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, Congressman, thank you for raising it. You are not the first, but—the first one since I have started these hearings. This is—I had two last week, this is my third, and I will have another one tomorrow. I am happy to make sure that I am connected with you, our teams are connected to be able to work through your asks, your concerns, your questions, to be responsive.

Mr. EVANS. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the gentlelady of Michigan, Mrs. Dingell, for three minutes.

Mrs. DINGELL. Thank you. It is great to see you, my fellow classmate. I am going to be short, but I have a lot of questions.

Brownfield sites. Southeast Michigan, like many places in the country, has communities that have been left behind for too long.

They have got—borne the brunt of toxic waste, industrial pollution, and contaminated sites. We have got a lot of legacy issues, as you know, not just in mine, but other manufacturing States, from fighting to get PFAS and lead out of our water to implementing funding and strengthening the Brownfield Programs to working across all levels of government. So I am going to hit three issues quickly, and thank you for being here.

I have to say that the announcement by EPA to roll back this—roll back the PFAS drinking water standard really worried me. Rescinding this standard means more Americans will be poisoned and have harmful PFAS contamination. That has been spreading, so too many people have already suffered the adverse effects of PFAS exposure. You know it is a forever chemical. It is in 98 percent of the people's blood. And we got to do something. We got to do everything possible to combat this dangerous things—this dangerous—for too long Michigan, quite frankly, had a drinking water standard that was more stringent under a Republican Governor than the guideline.

How do we make sure people have clean and safe drinking water?

Mr. ZELDIN. Congresswoman, we—as you noted, we had an announcement last week. The 4 parts per trillion MCL on PFOA and PFOS are staying. There is a procedural error in the way that the MCL was set on the other four. We are going to fix that. It has been inaccurately reported that this is a weakening of the MCL for those four. As I have noted since that reporting started, as a result of this process the MCL might be lower than 4. We will see.

Mrs. DINGELL. That is good, I mean, just so we can continue to work on safe drinking water.

Let me—yesterday it was announced that you had taken Flint off the—lifted the emergency order, which is good news for the people of Flint, and they reacted positively to it. But we still have to make sure that people have access to clean, safe, and affordable drinking water, because it is not a luxury. Can—will you work with us to defend last year's rule requiring all water systems remove lead from pipes within the next decade so we don't poison any more children?

Mr. ZELDIN. Congresswoman, I would like to have a meeting with my staff, including the talented, dedicated career staff inside the Office of Water, on that topic, and then huddle back up with you. We have spoken on the phone since I was confirmed, I am happy to stay in touch and do it again on—with regards to this question.

And I would just like to say, as far as Flint, Michigan, goes, it is a cause for celebration. As they pointed out to me when I visited Flint after confirmation, they have worked very hard for it. But it is important for them to know that the State and the Federal Government isn't abandoning Flint by lifting an emergency order.

Mrs. DINGELL. And I still need to talk to you about the plume, but I will put it on record because we have too many pollution problems in Michigan.

So thank you.

I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentlelady yields back. I now recognize the gentlelady of Texas, Mrs. Fletcher, for her 3 minutes.

Mrs. FLETCHER. Thank you so much, Chairman Griffith, Ranking Member Tonko, and Administrator Zeldin, and thank you for extending the time to hear from all of us who are waiving on.

With the limited time, I do want to raise an issue for you, Administrator. I represent the energy capital of the world in Houston, and our region is home to the largest petrochemical complex in the United States, the second-largest in the world. And we have the benefit of having the EPA's region 6 lab located in Houston. This has been a particularly important issue for us in the Houston region.

As I am sure you know, we are right there on the Gulf and subject to extreme weather events with too much frequency, and so the region 6 lab plays a critical role in helping us during these disasters. We had a hurricane last summer, we have had just record hurricanes and flooding over the last decade.

In 2019, EPA announced that it was going to close the region 6 lab in Houston and move the lab and all the employees to Ada, Oklahoma. I believe you are familiar with that facility and testified about it last week in Appropriations. But I have been fighting this move ever since I got here, ever since the announcement, because it is bad for our region to have to send those samples of air and water in these—potentially in disasters, but all the time as we experience these things in our region. It is also bad for EPA. I think the studies show that you will lose a lot of really talented, experienced professionals who don't want to move from Houston to Ada, Oklahoma. And so I think those are huge challenges both for our region and for the agency.

I have gotten several responses over the years that people agree that we need to keep a region 6 lab in Houston, and EPA leaders have confirmed multiple times that there will be a region 6 lab presence in Houston. So can you confirm for me today that we can work together to make sure that EPA will keep a region 6 lab in the Houston region?

Mr. ZELDIN. I can tell you that at no point since I was confirmed have I had any conversation with anyone about closing the region 6 lab in Houston. It hasn't been broached to me. I am not aware of conversations going on at the agency on the topic. I am happy to be in touch with you or work with you, and I will look into it and let you know if anyone else has had any conversations that haven't been brought up to me.

Mrs. FLETCHER. Well, and I can tell you it is being done pursuant to the 2015 law, the Federal asset sales transfer from, I guess, 2017. And so that is the idea of moving folks to Ada.

It is critically important that we keep this lab in Houston both for the agency and for our region. So I appreciate your willingness to engage on this. Many people have agreed at the agency that it is a problem, that we need to keep this lab in Houston. And of course, we want to make sure that we keep a qualified and talented workforce there, too. So I appreciate the opportunity to raise this and to work with you on this to ensure that we keep this lab in Houston.

Mr. ZELDIN. I will——

Mrs. FLETCHER. Thank you.

Mr. ZELDIN. I will look into it as soon as the hearing is over, and we will get back in touch.

Mrs. FLETCHER. Thank you.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentlelady yields back. I now recognize the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Balderson, for 3 minutes.

Mr. BALDERSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Administrator, thank you for being here. And I know that you have a hard stop. And guess what? I forgot my cheater, so I am just going to ask you one question and hopefully get through this with being able to see.

First I want to thank you and the Trump administration for bringing back some much-needed common sense back to the EPA.

Mr. Zeldin, I would like to discuss an issue specific to my home State of Ohio. Ohio's nuisance rule was originally instituted as part of the State's plan to enforce compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards after the passage of the Clean Air Act. In 2020, the EPA correctly removed this rule from the Ohio State implementation plan following considerable procedure and removal of similar provisions in other States. However, in the final days of this of his term, President Biden moved to reinstate this rule.

As the rule does nothing to enhance air quality protection and subjects Ohio businesses and manufacturers to weaponized litigation and lawsuits, I introduced a resolution under the Congressional Review Act to rescind this rule. Senator Husted is also carrying it in the Senate. How will your administration work to roll back unnecessary Federal interference in State air pollution policies?

Mr. ZELDIN. Congressman, I have had many meetings internally with our team at the Office of Air and Radiation with regards to this request from the State of Ohio. I have been in touch with Ohio officials. I appreciate your advocacy on behalf of your State. Those conversations and meetings between EPA and Ohio EPA will continue, and with the State, to go through this process with the State implementation plan.

As you pointed out, Senator Husted has also been advocating on this. He has spoken to me. And our new regional 5 Regional Administrator comes to that position coming from being the head of the Ohio EPA. So at the regional office there, they are very intimately familiar with this request. So at region 5 the Regional Administrator is also a key asset in working through this ask from Ohio.

Mr. BALDERSON. All right. Thank you very much. I appreciate it, Mr. Administrator.

I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Mullin, for 3 minutes.

Mr. MULLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Administrator, for being here.

East Palo Alto is a vibrant community in my district on the San Francisco Bay. The people there have an incredible spirit and history of advocating for their community. It also happens to be down the street from the Meta headquarters and Stanford University. Despite being so close to such wealth, East Palo Alto residents have struggled with a history of heavy industries being sited next to residential areas. There are over 62 toxic waste sites within the city's 2.5 square miles.

Not surprisingly, East Palo Alto faces challenges with air pollution. The biggest highway in the district, Highway 101, runs right through the middle of that community. The impacts of this pollution are undeniable. The community experiences significantly higher rates of asthma and respiratory disease. They have an average lifespan that is 13 years lower than the rest of San Mateo County.

That is why it was such a big deal for this community when your agency last year awarded funding to a community organization to address air pollution. One local leader noted that he had "residents calling me in tears, saying how incredible it was to see their struggle finally recognized." Pam Jones, a resident of East Palo Alto for over 45 years, remarked that the community had been "hopeful for a moment."

As you know, it takes tremendous effort and organizing just to pull together a grant application. This money would have provided air purifiers to over 400 families for kids with asthma, and seniors, as well. This wasn't about ideology or some slogan, this was about helping children and seniors breathe easier. So Administrator Zeldin, you canceled this grant, and I am just wondering why you made that decision.

Mr. ZELDIN. Yes, Congressman, I don't have the details of that grant. I had for all of the subcommittee members of all the—of all your colleagues on this committee, all the grants in their district.

I would say that 10 times out of 10 or 100 times out of 100, when I look at the details of every single one of the grants that are canceled, there is something in it that conflicts with this administration's priorities. However, if you would like to work together on any aspects of the grant where it is in alignment with the administration's priorities to successfully resolve it for the community, I am happy to work with you on that.

Mr. MULLIN. Thank you, sir. And do you believe the EPA or the President can decide not to spend money that Congress has appropriated?

Mr. ZELDIN. We have an obligation to spend money appropriated by Congress. We are in the middle of a fiscal year. We are not required to agree with the administration's priorities of the last presidential administration, but we will continue to get funding out the door before the end of this fiscal year with those top-line appropriations from Congress.

Mr. MULLIN. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. Now, if you can bear with us, Mr. Administrator, I recognize Mr. Obernolte from California for 3 minutes.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Thank you very much.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for your service and thank you for the work that you are doing to transform the EPA into an agency that, instead of being an impediment, is helping people comply with regulations and getting to a yes. I know that means a lot to me and to the different air quality management districts that I represent.

I wanted to ask you specifically about a concern I have about the—some of the reductions in force that have been occurring at

EPA. And I understand this is out of a desire to right-size the agency, and that is something I certainly am very supportive of. However, many of my agencies rely on the EPA to do things like issue permits or issue approvals or review plans, and there has been concern expressed that the reductions in force, even though we are transforming the EPA into a more streamlined organization, will result in delays in those approvals and permits getting issued. Can you give us some assurances that that is not the intention?

Mr. ZELDIN. Congressman, yes, we are going to fulfill all of our statutory obligations. And the way that the reorganization was proposed a couple of weeks ago allows us to better focus on those statutory obligations and reduce the backlogs.

So, for example, as I referenced earlier with a couple of your colleagues, we inherited a massive backlog with the pesticide review, a massive backlog with chemical review, with State implementation plans, with small refinery exemptions, and much more. We are putting resources into getting through those backlogs we inherited as quickly as possible. And with the pesticide review backlog as one of the examples, we have already worked through over 2,300 of those backlogged cases. We will continue at that pace, and we are taking measures to increase the pace of working through the backlog we inherited.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Thank you. And certainly, we all support your efforts to do that, and let's work together to make sure that we are turning the EPA into the type of agency that is not an impediment to getting some of these projects accomplished that we all prioritize.

One of those projects that is very near and dear to me is a project called the Barstow International Gateway. That is going to shift some of our freight from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach onto rail, instead of being on the highways. What can we do to—at the EPA to assist in advancing freight infrastructure that makes some of those projects become a reality?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, there's certain aspects of permitting where an environmental assessment might be done, our technical assistance may be requested. We are here looking to help all members of this committee to help your constituents. If there is a specific request that you have on how EPA can help you, please let us know so that we can work through it.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. OK. Well, thanks. You have got a great Regional Administrator in Joshua Cook. He is an amazing man, and we thank you for your service and his, and let's work together on getting some of these projects across the finish line.

I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the gentlelady from Virginia, Ms. McClellan.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Administrator Zeldin, for staying 3 more minutes. As you know, this hearing follows a 26½-hour markup of a bill that is still moving its way through Congress that sends a clear message to the States to do more with less. And if members of the Freedom Caucus get their way, States will have to do even more with even less, depending on what the final cuts to Medicaid look like.

But even though sometimes government governs in silos, people don't live in silos, and State governments are dealing with all of the impacts of the Trump administration. So you take a State like Virginia that has the second-highest number of Federal employees, has already been hit hard by mass layoffs as our labor market is cooling, our unemployment rate is expected to reach its highest rate since 2021, bucking a national trend, and our GDP growth is looking to slow down, and that is at the same time that the Commonwealth, like other States, is going to have to look to fill severe budget gaps due to Medicaid cuts, funding cuts, and the shifting of more responsibility to the States.

And so the proposed budget cuts more than $1 billion from categorical grants to the States, and these grants give States a baseline capacity that they need to carry out federally mandated environmental protections. So slashing them handcuffs the States' ability to continue to address pollution.

And earlier this month the Environmental Council of States sent the EPA a letter highlighting how States carry out more than 90 percent of the Nation's Federal environmental programs, and States, State legislatures, and the business community depend on Congress to fund their efforts through grants and partnerships with the EPA. This letter warned that if Congress were to adopt the White House recommendation for discretionary spending, States may be required to terminate primary delegation or authorization agreements and return full program implementation to the EPA, which would overwhelm the EPA and have detrimental impacts to the economic development.

So Mr. Chair, I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter this letter into the record.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Without objection——

Ms. MCCLELLAN. And——

Mr. GRIFFITH [continuing]. So ordered.

[The letter appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Ms. MCCLELLAN. And I will get this question out, and I know you are going to have to answer it later.

But I really want to know how States are supposed to implement critical environmental programs under the drastic cuts proposed in the budget. And if the States can't and are forced to return those responsibilities to the EPA, how do you plan to carry them out with the severe staffing and funding cuts at the Federal level?

Mr. ZELDIN. Well, Congresswoman, I know we only have 8 seconds here, so we are happy to follow up.

But we at the EPA are going to fulfill all of our statutory obligations. We are receiving many requests for additional primacy coming from States. I just signed off on moving forward with class 1 through 6. The primacy request coming from Arizona, we are dealing with one right now. A request came in from Texas and elsewhere, and we have signed off on 25 State implementation plans, 16 of which were backlogged from the last administration. We want to advance cooperative partnership with States. We want to hear their concerns and try to figure out how to help them deliver clean air, land, and water for their constituents, which is an obligation with—for all levels of government.

I appreciate your concern and your interest on this particular issue, and welcome the opportunity to work with you on it.

Ms. McCLELLAN. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. GRIFFITH. The gentlelady yields back. Seeing no additional Members, I ask unanimous consent to insert in the record any documents not previously admitted into the record included on the staff hearing documents list.

Without objection, so ordered.

[The information appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. GRIFFITH. I remind Members they have 10 business days to submit questions for the record, and I ask the witness to respond to the questions promptly.

Without objection, the subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:00 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

Chairman Brett Guthrie
Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Environment
"The Fiscal Year 2026 Environmental Protection Agency Budget"
May 20, 2025

As prepared for delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Administrator Zeldin, it's great to have you back in the House to discuss the Environmental Protection Agency's budget request for fiscal year 2026. Thank you for being here today.

The previous administration forced Green New Deal-style policies on Americans through massive overspending and minimal oversight, with little regard for the needs of job creators and rural communities.

Under Biden-Harris, the EPA transitioned from an agency created to help protect our communities and our environment to that of a piggy bank for the climate lobby.

Administrator Zeldin has announced an ambitious agenda that will return EPA to its core mission of protecting human health and the environment. EPA should not be an unchecked antagonist to American industry and the small businesses that have to shoulder the burdens of unnecessary regulation, or a barrier to energy innovations that increase basic costs of living for middle class Americans.

I welcome Administrator Zeldin's recent announcement to review more than 30 of the previous administration's regulatory excesses, and I know the members of this Committee look forward to working together to get things back on track at the agency.

This Committee has already taken steps to overturn the Biden-Harris Administration's costly mandates on a range of industries and the ceding of power to the State of California, and tomorrow the House is voting to disapprove yet another regulation, this time under the Clean Air Act, that actually **discourages** facilities from reducing their emissions.

There is more work than needs to be done, including reconsidering power plant rules so we can have less expensive and more reliable energy to power our grid in support of consumers, advanced manufacturing, and AI technologies; fixing EPA's chemical program so that safer alternatives can gain approval and get to the market more quickly; and cleaning up Brownfields and other contaminated sites so they can be put back into productive use.

Administrator Zeldin has also announced this EPA would be efficient and responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars with no tolerance for waste. We can protect the environment as well as address our energy and economic needs—we do not need to choose.

I look forward to discussing how we will achieve the Great American Comeback under this administration.

Before I yield back, I want to take a minute to congratulate you on your recent retirement from the military. For those of you who did not know, Administrator Zeldin served in our military for 22 years, retiring this month from the Army Reserves as a Lieutenant Colonel.

In 2006, while on Active Duty, he deployed to Iraq with the 82^{nd} Airborne Division in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. I speak for all of us here when I say thank you for your military service and your continued service to our great nation in this new role.

Thank you again for being here, and I yield back.

U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Environment
"The Fiscal Year 2026 Environmental Protection Agency Budget."
May 20, 2025
Documents for the Record

1. A press release from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency entitled, "EPA Celebrates 100 Days with 100 Environmental Actions", submitted by Rep. Joyce.[1]
2. A statement from Daniel Coogan, submitted by Rep Pallone
3. An excerpt from docket number 147-4, submitted by Rep. Pallone.
4. A transcript of March 12, 2025 Motion Hearing, Climate United Fund vs. Citibank, submitted by Rep. Barragan.[1]
5. An article from the New York Times entitled, "Investigators See No Criminality by E.P.A Officials in Case on Biden-Era Grant", submitted by Rep. Barragan.
6. A report from the EPA OIG entitled, "Actions Needed to Strengthen Controls Over the EPA Administrator's and Associated Saff's Travel," submitted by Rep. Landsman.[1]
7. A report from the EPA OIG entitled, "EPA Law Enforcement Availability Pay Properly Certified but Controls Over Process Could be Improved", submitted by Rep. Landsman**.**[1]
8. A report from GAO entitled, "Progress on Many High-Risk Areas, While Substantial Efforts Needed on Others", submitted by Rep. Landsman.[1]
9. A fact sheet from Banner entitled "Down the Drain, How Slashing Water Investment Risks America's Economy", submitted by the Minority.
10. A letter from the EPA Alumni Association, addressed to EPA Administrator Zeldin, submitted by the Minority.
11. An article from the Washington Post entitled, "Trump Orders the Government to Stop Enforcing Rules He Doesn't Like", submitted by the Minority.
12. A letter from the Environmental Council of the States, addressed to Administrator Zeldin, submitted by Rep. McClellan.

[1]The information has been retained in committee files and is included in the Documents for the Record at https://docs.house.gov/meetings/IF/IF18/20250520/118283/HHRG-119-IF18-20250520-SD006.pdf.

DECLARATION OF DANIEL COOGAN

I, Daniel Coogan, declare and state as follows:

1. I am the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Infrastructure and Extramural Resources in the Office of Mission Support, for the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") located at 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20460. I have been in my current position since December 2023, and I have been at the agency since November 2004. I make the following factual statements based on my personal knowledge and belief. If called as a witness, I could and would competently testify thereto.

2. During the transition between the last Presidential Administration and the current Administration, EPA has limited activity on grant awards and actions so career staff can brief the new Administration on the on-going grants and programs and help the new Administration understand how the program aligns with their priorities including ensuring the safeguard of Agency funds.

3. As part of this effort, and distinct from any Executive Orders or OMB memorandums, EPA leadership conducted an individualized, grant-by-grant review to determine which grants should continue, which should be modified, and which should be terminated based on alignment with Administration priorities or the purposes for which the Federal award was made. EPA began this process for the Administration in January 2025.

4. The review process resulted in EPA continuing all Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (“IIJA”) grants, which include 2,004 active grants totaling $27.5 billion. Many Inflation Reduction Act (“IRA”) grants remain active following review, including 979 active grants totaling $39.5 billion.

5. The above review process occurred prior to the issuance of the preliminary injunction on April 15, with decisions to terminate tranches of IRA grants made on the following dates: February 13, March 3, March 10, and April 14.

EPA is in the process of sending out the formal termination/cancellation notices to all of the impacted grantees. EPA has already sent out formal notices to approximately 377 grantees. For the remaining approximately 404 grantees, EPA plans to issue notices within the next two weeks.

6. EPA has only paused access to funding in Automatic Standard Application for Payments ("ASAP") for recipients of the following IRA grant programs which are slated to be terminated as mentioned above: Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program; Surveys, Studies, Investigations, Training and Special Purpose Activities Relating to Environmental Justice; Environmental Justice Government-to-Government (EJG2G) Program; Environmental Justice Small Grant Program; Financial Assistance For Community Support Activities To Address Environmental Justice Issues; Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program (EJ TCGM); Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grant Program; and Reducing Embodied Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Construction Materials and Products.

7. EPA understands the Court's Order to require that all funds appropriated under the IRA or IIJA be unfrozen unless there is a pre-existing determination (from before entry of the preliminary injunction) to pause that funding on an individualized basis for some other, independent reason (i.e., apart from the fact that it was appropriated under the IRA or IIJA). The above still-paused, soon-to-be-terminated IRA grants meet those criteria. Accordingly, EPA believes that continued pauses of those grants complies with the Court's Order. EPA is not "freezing, halting, or pausing on a non-individualized basis the processing and payment of funding that (1) was appropriated under the Inflation Reduction Act or the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and (2) has already been awarded." *Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council v. United States Dep't of Agric.*, No.

1:25-cv-00097-MSM-PAS, 2025 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 71378 (D.R.I. Apr. 15, 2025) (order granting preliminary injunction).

8. Despite the current pause on these grants, EPA will still reimburse all costs incurred prior to the grant formally being terminated, once recipients submit final invoices as part of the grant close-out process as detailed in the grant termination letter and at 2 CFR § 200.334.

9. Restoring access to the paused grants would expose EPA and taxpayers to tremendous risk as recipients would have the ability to draw-down large portions of grant funding in ASAP, and could believe that they have an incentive to make such draws if they believed the pause on the suspension was temporary. Recouping these funds upon termination of the grants would be difficult.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

DANIEL COOGAN Digitally signed by DANIEL COOGAN Date: 2025.04.23 10:45:40 -04'00'

Daniel Coogan
Deputy Assistant Administrator for Infrastructure and Extramural Resources
Office of Mission Support
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

The Sustainability Institute, et. al., Plaintiffs, v. DONALD J. TRUMP, in his official capacity as President of the United States, et. al., Defendants	Civil Action No.: 2:25-cv-02152-RMG

DECLARATION OF TRAVIS VOYLES

I, TRAVIS VOYLES, declare and state as follows:

1. I am an Assistant Deputy Administrator at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Assistant Deputy Administrator is the EPA official responsible for providing executive and logistical support for the EPA Administrator. I have held this position since January 2025. I make the following factual statements based on my personal knowledge and belief. If called as a witness, I could and would competently testify thereto.

2. The following is provided in response to paragraph 1 of the April 29, 2025, Court Order ("the Order"), specifically regarding:

- Grant #2 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #5F-03D33625-0 to Earth Island Institute, listed as "Termination in Progress";
- Grant #3 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #03D30824[1] to The Sustainability Institute, listed as "Termination in Progress";
- Grant #4 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #97T28301 to Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, listed as "Termination in Progress";

[1] Exhibit A erroneously omitted a zero from the beginning of this grant number.

Exhibit 4

- Grant #5 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #96272300 to Bronx River Alliance, listed as "Termination in Progress";
- Grant #6 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #97T28901 to Earth Island Institute, listed as "Termination in Progress";
- Grant #7 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #00A01479 to City of New Haven, listed as "Termination in Progress";
- Grant #8 on Exhibit A to the Order, inadvertently identified as Grant #0E+00000 to the City of Madison, and therefore incorrectly listed as "Closed", and which should be listed as Grant #00E05005 to the City of Madison, and "Termination in Progress";

and

- Grant #9 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #00A01441 to City of New Haven, listed as "Terminated";
- Grant #10 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #95336801 to City of Baltimore, listed as "Terminated";
- Grant #11 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #03D03424 to CleanAIRE NC, listed as "Terminated";
- Grant #12 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #96229424 to Bronx River Alliance, listed as "Terminated".

3. On February 25, 2025, I conducted an individualized review of EPA grant programs for consistency with Agency policy priorities. That day, I decided that certain grant programs, identified by "Assistance Number Listing," should be terminated for policy reasons. I orally communicated my decision to Daniel Coogan, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Infrastructure and Extramural Resources in the Office of Mission Support. That evening, Mr. Coogan sent an

email to me, copying others, documenting the decision I had made earlier that day. *See* Exhibit 1, Bates No. EPA_00289735.

4. On March 7, 2025, Mr. Coogan sent an email to leadership in the EPA Office of the Chief Financial Officer instructing them to put a financial control in the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system for the grants that had been identified for termination. In a separate email, I elaborated that the purpose of the control was "to prevent any drawdowns in the time between announcement and execution [of grant termination] through [the Office of Mission Support]." *See* Exhibit 2, Bates No. EPA_00048219.

5. Later that day, staff in the EPA Office of the Chief Financial Officer executed my instructions, and sent an email back to their leadership with an attached excel spreadsheet verifying the programs they had subjected to the financial control, as well as a list of the individual awards for which drawdowns had been frozen as a result. *See* Exhibit 3, Bates No. EPA_00000735 and Exhibit 4, Bates No. EPA_00000739. Each of the grants listed in Paragraph 1 of this Declaration appears on that spreadsheet.

6. Consistent with my instruction, throughout March, EPA began terminating the grants I had originally identified for termination on February 25, 2025, while noting the need to comply with court orders in various cases. *See* Exhibit 5, Bates No. EPA_00292053 and Exhibit 6, Bates No. EPA_00292054. Accordingly:

- Grant #9 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #00A01441 to City of New Haven was terminated on March 27, 2025;
- Grant #10 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #95336801 to City of Baltimore was terminated on March 26, 2025;
- Grant #11 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #03D03424 to CleanAIRE NC, was terminated on March 28, 2025; and
- Grant #12 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #96229424 to Bronx River Alliance, was terminated on March 28, 2025.

7. The process of terminating grants while remaining in compliance with court orders continues today. *See* Exhibit 7, Decl. of Daniel Coogan filed in *Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council et al. v. Department of Agriculture et al.*, 1:25-cv-00097 (D.R.I.), April 23, 2025, at para 5.

8. Accordingly, each of the grants identified in Paragraph 1 of this Declaration as "termination in progress" has not been terminated, and, as of the date of this Declaration, each of those recipients currently has access to draw down funding from ASAP.

9. In response to paragraph 4 of the April 29, 2025, Order, regarding Grant #15 on Exhibit A to the Order, Grant #0602.24.082555 to Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley, upon further review, that grant is not from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Therefore, I have no information to provide regarding that grant.

10. In response to paragraph 5 of the April 29, 2025, Order, regarding Grant #8 on Exhibit A to the Order, as indicated in paragraph 1 of this Declaration above, Exhibit A erroneously identified the subject grant as Grant #0E+00000 to the City of Madison, and as a result incorrectly listed as the grant as "Closed." Upon further review, the grant at issue is Grant #00E05005 to the City of Madison, and its status is "Termination in Progress." Funds are currently available to the recipient.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on this 6th day of May 2025.

/s/ TRAVIS VOYLES

Digitally signed by TRAVIS VOYLES
Date: 2025.05.06 15:00:29 -04'00'

Travis Voyles
Assistant Deputy Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency

Message

From:	/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=7AA3C293E3F94FE6A0132382B42F0B23-DCOOGAN [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=7AA3C293E3F94FE6A0132382B42F0B23-DCOOGAN]
Sent:	2/25/2025 8:26:24 PM
To:	Voyles, Travis [voyles.travis@epa.gov]; Loving, Kathryn [Loving.Kathryn@epa.gov]; Jehling, Erica [Jehling.Erica@epa.gov]
CC:	Molina, Michael [molina.michael@epa.gov]; Patrick, Kimberly [Patrick.Kimberly@epa.gov]
Subject:	Next Steps on Grant Actions - Feb 25

Travis, just wanted to make sure we are all aligned on today's discussion and next steps. Below is the list of grant programs that require some action from OMS (for those that you cleared to continue operating, like Brownfields, I am not including them below and we will just communicate that direction separately with the programs and regions). The one caveat that I forgot to mention is that Deliberative Process

Deliberative Process

CFDA/Assistance Number Listing	CFDA/Assistance Listing Title	Unawarded Grants	Grants Awarded Prior to October 1, 2024	Grants Awarded After October 1, 2024
66.040	Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) State Grants	Pause pre-award. OMS direct OAR to clear with OAR political leadership that pending actions align with administration priorities.	No change.	No change.
66.049	Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Program	Cancel any unawarded/ unobligated actions and decommit funding.	Terminate grants and pay final invoices.	No new award actions but hold on any terminations until further discussion with OGC.
66.306	Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program	Cancel any unawarded/ unobligated actions and decommit funding.	Terminate grants and pay final invoices.	No new award actions but hold on any terminations until further discussion with OGC.
66.309	Surveys, Studies, Investigations, Training and Special Purpose Activities Relating to Environmental Justice	Cancel any unawarded/ unobligated actions and realign with administration priorities.	Confirm funding source before further action.	Confirm funding source before further action.

66.312	Environmental Justice Government-to-Government (EJG2G) Program	Cancel any unawarded/ unobligated actions and decommit funding.	No change.	No change.
66.604	Environmental Justice Small Grant Program	Cancel any unawarded/ unobligated actions and decommit funding.	Terminate grants and pay final invoices.	No new award actions but hold on any terminations until further discussion with OGC.
66.614	Financial Assistance For Community Support Activities To Address Environmental Justice Issues	Cancel any unawarded/ unobligated actions and decommit funding.	Terminate grants and pay final invoices.	No new award actions but hold on any terminations until further discussion with OGC.
66.615	Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program (EJ TCGM)	Cancel any unawarded/ unobligated actions and decommit funding.	Terminate grants and pay final invoices.	No new award actions but hold on any terminations until further discussion with OGC.
66.616	Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grant Program	Cancel any unawarded/ unobligated actions and decommit funding.	Terminate grants and pay final invoices.	No new award actions but hold on any terminations until further discussion with OGC.
66.721	Reducing Embodied Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Construction Materials and Products	Cancel any unawarded/ unobligated actions and decommit funding.	No change.	No change.
66.951	Environmental Education Grants Program	Hold any unawarded/ unobligated actions to ensure compliance with Administration priorities.	No change.	No change.

Investigators See No Criminality by E.P.A. Officials in Case on Biden-Era Grants

A contentious investigation that questioned the legality of E.P.A. grants has found very little to suggest government employees violated the law.

Listen to this article · 5:42 min Learn more

By Devlin Barrett, Glenn Thrush and Adam Goldman
Reporting from Washington

May 16, 2025

A politically fraught investigation opened by the Trump administration into a Biden-era Environmental Protection Agency grant program has so far failed to find meaningful evidence of criminality by government officials, according to people familiar with the matter.

The criminal investigation, initiated by Ed Martin, then the interim U.S. attorney in Washington, was cheered by Republicans, who have made unsubstantiated claims that the multibillion-dollar program, intended to fund climate and clean energy initiatives, was a political slush fund.

The program, part of the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, was one of President Biden's most significant actions on the environment.

Internal disagreements over the merits of the investigation raised alarms among current and former Justice Department officials, who were concerned that the Trump administration was misusing the vast power of federal law enforcement to discredit people, policies and programs President Trump disliked, such as clean energy projects.

While the investigation of some entities that received money through the program is continuing, agents and prosecutors see little evidence of any criminal conduct by E.P.A. officials who oversaw the funding. The vendor portion of the inquiry has yet to yield any strong evidence of criminal conduct, according to people with knowledge of the investigation who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

Prosecutors and agents have shared their findings with senior political leaders at the Justice Department, according to people familiar with the matter.

A Justice Department spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Last week, a senior prosecutor in the U.S. attorney's office informed one vendor who received a contract through the E.P.A. program that it would no longer need to turn over documents and correspondence as required by a Feb. 20 subpoena obtained by Mr. Martin, a conservative Republican activist close to Mr. Trump.

The investigation has been a source of considerable frustration and consternation among federal prosecutors, as political appointees pressed for investigative steps, such as freezing bank accounts, that career officials believed were unwarranted. The conflict led to the abrupt departure of a senior career prosecutor in the office.

At issue was billions of dollars in federal "green bank" funding from the E.P.A.'s Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, which received more than $20 billion under the Inflation Reduction Act. The fund, which disbursed grants to eight vendors, was a political target for the right.

Earlier this year, Trump administration officials claimed that they had evidence the funding had been improperly distributed — it had been "parked" at a major bank in the waning days of the Biden administration. They suggested they had uncovered extensive fraud, including the illicit transfer of gold bars, without providing evidence.

Trump administration officials referred to a video released last year by Project Veritas, a conservative group known for its sting operations aimed at news organizations, Democratic politicians and advocacy groups. The group's tactics have prompted allegations of publishing deceptively edited videos.

The video, filmed in a social setting, showed Brent Efron, then an E.P.A. employee, talking about the departing Biden administration's efforts to quickly spend federal money. He compared it to throwing "gold bars" off the Titanic before it sank. A lawyer for Mr. Efron has since said he was not referring to the grant program.

The E.P.A. used Citibank to transfer much of the money, which was frozen for part of the time the program was being investigated.

It is not clear whether a parallel administrative review by the E.P.A. inspector general, who had been working with prosecutors, is continuing.

Mark Zaid, a lawyer for Mr. Efron, said the inquiry was without merit. "There was absolutely never anything there to investigate," he said.

The E.P.A., which has worked in recent months to block the nonprofits from gaining access to the money, is now being sued by several of the organizations for breach of contract.

During a hearing on the case in April, Judge Tanya S. Chutkan of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia said the E.P.A. provided "different positions" to justify its actions, but not evidence of waste, fraud or abuse.

"Here we are, weeks in, and you're still unable to proffer me any evidence with regard to malfeasance," she told Justice Department officials.

From the start, experts in the distribution of government funds said Mr. Trump and his allies either misunderstood or mischaracterized how such payments work.

The issue came to a head in February at the U.S. attorney's office in Washington, where a top prosecutor, Denise Cheung, abruptly resigned after refusing an order to open a criminal investigation into a government vendor and to freeze unspent assets kept in accounts with banks, including Citibank.

In her resignation letter, Ms. Cheung said she felt there was not sufficient evidence to justify cutting off the nonprofits' access to the accounts.

After her resignation, the office pressed on with the case, but investigators who pored over account information and related evidence could not find reason to believe a crime had been committed by E.P.A. officials, according to people familiar with the case.

Charlie Savage contributed reporting.

Devlin Barrett covers the Justice Department and the F.B.I. for The Times.

Glenn Thrush covers the Department of Justice for The Times and has also written about gun violence, civil rights and conditions in the country's jails and prisons.

Adam Goldman writes about the F.B.I. and national security. He has been a journalist for more than two decades.

A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 22 of the New York edition with the headline: Investigators See No Criminality by E.P.A. in Case on Biden-Era Grants

BANNER

Down the Drain

How Slashing Water Investment Risks America's Economy

Background

Clean, safe water is essential to public health, economic growth, and community well-being. But a nearly 90% reduction in water infrastructure funding puts decades of progress at risk.

The President's FY2026 Budget proposes a staggering $2.46 billion (89 percent) cut to the Clean and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds—the main sources of federal funding to keep our water safe and secure.

These cuts don't just affect pipes and pumps—they threaten American jobs, delay billions in private investment, shift the cost burden to families already facing inflation, and put public health at risk.

Why It Matters

Water infrastructure is the backbone of a functioning economy--from safe and secure drinking water to flood-resilient sewer systems. Water systems provide essential services that businesses and families depend on daily—and they're especially critical for small towns, rural communities, and fast-growing suburbs struggling to keep pace with demand.

Investment in water delivers real returns:

15.7 American jobs

Every **$1 million invested** in water infrastructure supports **15.7 good-paying American jobs**.

$1 turns into $2.63

Every **$1 invested generates $2.63 in economic output** across the U.S. economy.

$2.46B in proposed cuts = 38,622 jobs lost and $6.47B in lost output

Cutting federal water infrastructure funding would have far-reaching economic consequences. Water systems cannot absorb reductions of this magnitude without jeopardizing service reliability, delaying critical upgrades, and weakening America's infrastructure workforce.

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The Economic Fallout

If enacted, these cuts would undermine the economic foundation of communities across the country:

Working families would face an increased cost of living
Working families would face an increased cost of living through as local governments lose federal cost-sharing and are forced to increase water bills or delay essential repairs that could threaten public health.

Small and rural utilities would fall behind
Small and rural utilities would fall behind, as cuts to technical assistance and workforce development leave them without the tools to modernize or meet regulatory standards. That puts residents at risk of service disruptions and higher maintenance costs down the line.

Certainty would disappear for states and municipalities
Certainty would disappear for states and municipalities, making it harder to plan long-term and harder to attract private investment needed to modernize infrastructure.

Shovel-ready projects would stall
Shovel-ready projects would stall, leaving billions in private capital on the sidelines and delaying job creation, economic growth, and infrastructure upgrades in cities and towns nationwide.

Momentum to modernize aging infrastructure would be lost
Momentum to modernize aging infrastructure would be lost, threatening America's competitiveness and the economic security of our workers and businesses.

Well-funded water infrastructure programs don't just repair aging systems—they help keep costs down for hardworking families, safeguard America's critical infrastructure, and support local economic growth. Every federal dollar invested serves as a force multiplier—attracting private capital, supporting good jobs, and strengthening our nation's long-term competitiveness.

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How Funding Cuts Would Affect Your State

Cuts to water infrastructure funding will have drastic impacts in every state. Below Is a chart showing the expected reduction in funds by state.

State	FY21 Base SRF Allotments by State	FY26 Projected Base SRF Allotments by State if 89% Cuts are Enacted*	Projected Reduction in Allotments to States (FY21-FY26)
Alabama	$41.66 M	$4.60 M	-$37.06 M
Alaska	$20.61 M	$2.27 M	-$18.33 M
Arizona	$30.62 M	$3.38 M	-$27.25 M
Arkansas	$27.05 M	$2.98 M	-$24.07 M
California	$211.83 M	$23.37 M	-$188.47 M
Colorado	$34.57 M	$3.81 M	-$30.76 M
Connecticut	$30.66 M	$3.38 M	-$27.28 M
Delaware	$18.88 M	$2.08 M	-$16.80 M
Florida	$97.48 M	$10.75 M	-$86.73 M
Georgia	$53.06 M	$5.85 M	-$47.21 M
Hawaii	$23.43 M	$2.58 M	-$20.85 M
Idaho	$18.88 M	$2.08 M	-$16.80 M
Illinois	$114.09 M	$12.59 M	-$101.51 M
Indiana	$55.49 M	$6.12 M	-$49.37 M
Iowa	$39.15 M	$4.32 M	-$34.83 M
Kansas	$27.25 M	$3.01 M	-$24.24 M
Kentucky	$38.55 M	$4.25 M	-$34.30 M
Louisiana	$34.11 M	$3.76 M	-$30.35 M
Maine	$23.43 M	$2.58 M	-$20.84 M
Maryland	$58.97 M	$6.50 M	-$52.46 M
Massachusetts	$80.02 M	$8.83 M	-$71.19 M
Michigan	$96.01 M	$10.59 M	-$85.42 M
Minnesota	$46.29 M	$5.11 M	-$41.18 M
Mississippi	$26.30 M	$2.90 M	-$23.40 M
Missouri	$63.89 M	$7.05 M	-$56.84 M
Montana	$18.88 M	$2.08 M	-$16.80 M
Nebraska	$19.21 M	$2.12 M	-$17.09 M
Nevada	$20.63 M	$2.28 M	-$18.36 M
New Hampshire	$27.04 M	$2.98 M	-$24.06 M
New Jersey	$84.36 M	$9.31 M	-$75.05 M

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New Mexico	$18.88 M	$2.08 M	-$16.80 M
New York	$222.07 M	$24.50 M	-$197.58 M
North Carolina	$62.75 M	$6.92 M	-$55.83 M
North Dakota	$18.88 M	$2.08 M	-$16.80 M
Ohio	$118.02 M	$13.02 M	-$105.00 M
Oklahoma	$28.56 M	$3.15 M	-$25.41 M
Oregon	$32.60 M	$3.60 M	-$29.01 M
Pennsylvania	$97.45 M	$10.75 M	-$86.70 M
Puerto Rico	$31.93 M	$3.52 M	-$28.41 M
Rhode Island	$21.78 M	$2.40 M	-$19.38 M
South Carolina	$30.69 M	$3.39 M	-$27.30 M
South Dakota	$18.88 M	$2.08 M	-$16.80 M
Tennessee	$42.42 M	$4.68 M	-$37.74 M
Texas	$159.56 M	$17.60 M	-$141.96 M
Utah	$19.46 M	$2.15 M	-$17.31 M
Vermont	$18.88 M	$2.08 M	-$16.80 M
Virginia	$50.80 M	$5.60 M	-$45.19 M
Washington	$52.49 M	$5.79 M	-$46.70 M
West Virginia	$36.02 M	$3.97 M	-$32.05 M
Wisconsin	$62.14 M	$6.85 M	-$55.28 M
Wyoming	$18.88 M	$2.08 M	-$16.80 M
D.C.	$18.88 M	$2.08 M	-$16.80 M

* Beginning in FY23, the EPA made small adjustments to the Drinking Water SRF allotment formula. Because of this, the chart's expression of an 89% cut to SRF funding that uses FY21 as the baseline year will be incorrect in minor ways for some states. FY21 is used as the baseline year because it is the most recent year prior to earmark funding being removed from the topline SRF appropriation before state allotments were made.

The formula changes made in FY23 can be reviewed here:
https://www.epa.gov/dwsrf/annual-allotment-federal-funds-states-tribes-and-territories

EPA Alumni Association

We're Not Done Yet!

May 19, 2025

An Open Letter to EPA Administrator Zeldin and Members of Congress

Last month, Administrator Lee Zeldin of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a list of 100 accomplishments achieved during the first 100 days of the new Administration. The implication of this announcement was that EPA both could and would continue to fully carry out its mission of protecting human health and the environment under Mr. Zeldin's leadership. But the problem with this pronouncement is that the 100 accomplishments were achieved by an EPA operating with full funding, full staffing, and a full complement of regulations over the past several years. What really happened is that the efforts of Administrator Zeldin's predecessors happened to bear fruit during this 100-day period. They were important results, but they could not have happened without all the work that came before.

Administrator Zeldin has already caused or will soon cause the loss of thousands of EPA staff. He also intends to reduce EPA's budget by over 50%. These reductions would put EPA back to its resources in 1980, before the implementation of critical new or expanded programs such as Superfund, key controls on hazardous waste, and important programs under the Clean Air Act and the Toxic Substances Control Act. In addition to all of this, he intends to revoke many of EPA's regulations. The notion that EPA can continue to adequately protect human health and the environment under such conditions is, frankly, not believable.

EPA must understand the impacts of thousands of chemicals on human health and the environment, and this takes years of effort. It also takes a high level of training and expertise, and the use of expensive equipment, to detect these chemicals in the environment and to predict their likely migration. Chemicals often act differently from each other and act differently depending upon whether they are found in the air, water, or soil. Pollution is frequently found underground or diffused in the air and is thus not easily characterized. Understanding how various industries reduce pollution, and how to assure the continued efficacy of these reductions are all resource intensive endeavors.

Doing EPA's mission "on the cheap" means, in practical terms, more pollution and thus more harm. You get what you pay for. Cutting corners can also make existing problems worse. The 100 days announcement made by Administrator Zeldin actually proves the reverse of what he claims. To keep these accomplishments coming, EPA must be made whole in staffing, funding, and regulations.

The Board of Directors of the EPA Alumni Association

National

Trump orders the government to stop enforcing rules he doesn't like

Critics say the administration is breaking the law and sidestepping the rulemaking process that presidents of both parties have routinely followed.

Yesterday at 6:00 a.m. EDT

By Maxine Joselow, Hannah Natanson and Ian Duncan

At the Transportation Department, enforcement of pipeline safety rules has plunged to unprecedented lows since President Donald Trump's inauguration.

Trump recently ordered Energy Department staff to stop enforcing water conservation standards for showerheads and other household appliances. And at one Labor Department division, his appointees have instructed employees to halt most work related to antidiscrimination laws.

Across the government, the Trump administration is trying a new tactic for gutting federal rules and policies that the president dislikes: simply stop enforcing them.

"The conscious effort to slow down enforcement on such a broad scale is something we have never seen in previous administrations," said Donald Kettl, a professor emeritus at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy. "It amounts to a dramatic assertion of presidential power and authority."

This account of the Trump administration's efforts to scale back application of many laws is based on interviews with more than a dozen federal employees across seven agencies, as well as a review of internal documents and federal data. The employees spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of retribution.

Trump officials say these efforts will allow the president to swiftly scrap regulations that are burdening a variety of businesses and industries.

"When you have a new regulation, it's really, really hard on business," Kevin Hassett, who directs Trump's National Economic Council, told CNBC on Monday.

"They've got to hire all these engineers and lawyers to figure out, 'What are we going to do with this new regulation?'" Hassett added. "And so by pausing that, already, we're having a big, massive, positive effect."

Critics say the administration is breaking the law and sidestepping the rulemaking process that presidents of both parties have routinely followed.

"They're making across-the-board decisions not to enforce whole categories of standards, and it is of very dubious legality," said Richard Revesz, who led the White House regulatory affairs office under President Joe Biden and is now the faculty director of the Institute for Policy Integrity at New York University School of Law.

At the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, a division of the Transportation Department that enforces pipeline safety regulations, officials have opened five cases against potential violators of those rules since Trump's inauguration, federal data shows. That marks a 95 percent drop from the 91 cases that PHMSA officials opened in the same period under Biden, as well as a 93 percent drop from the 68 cases in the same period in Trump's first term and a 90 percent drop from the 52 cases opened in that period under President Barack Obama.

It is unclear whether the Trump administration's mass firings have reduced enforcement staff at PHMSA and other safety agencies. But the decline in pipeline cases comes as the Transportation Department overhauls its approach to compliance, empowering challenges to enforcement actions and heightening scrutiny of those who carry them out.

On Thursday, the agency issued a proposal that would enable Transportation Department lawyers to recommend discipline against enforcement employees suspected of breaking agency rules. The blueprint also outlines a system for the targets of investigations to complain to the transportation secretary's office, and seek to have evidence thrown out or a do-over of the investigation.

The proposal says it is designed to ensure that the department's actions are "fair and free of bias." But three department employees said that the disciplinary provision and other measures in the blueprint would probably have a chilling effect on enforcement.

"If we lived in a world where there existed a bunch of malicious DOT employees whose mission it was to screw over innocent pipeline owners or car manufacturers, I'd understand the purpose of imposing these guidelines," one of the employees said. "But the people I know, and have worked with for years, are just trying to make sure everyone follows the rules."

Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Washington) criticized the proposal in a letter Thursday to PHMSA, saying it creates an avenue for political appointees to retaliate against civil servants.

"Inspectors and investigators will fear that they could be fired just for doing their job — ensuring the safety of the American public," wrote Cantwell, the top Democrat on the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

Asked for comment, a spokesperson for the Transportation Department said in a statement that "the last administration carried out enforcements without sufficient due process, consistency and fairness."

"We see it differently," the spokesperson said, adding that the department would focus trucking enforcement efforts on issues such as cargo theft, fraud by brokers and visa issues.

In some cases, Trump has personally ordered a halt to enforcement. The president on May 9 signed a memorandum directing the Energy Department "not to enforce" what he called "useless" water conservation standards for home appliances including bathtubs, faucets, showerheads and toilets.

Devin Watkins, an attorney at the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank that has long fought efficiency standards, praised Trump's move.

"Federal limits on water and energy use have made appliances slower and less effective, frustrating consumers and limiting their choices," Watkins said in an email. "President Trump's new executive order marks a return to consumer choice — allowing Americans to purchase appliances that are faster, more effective and better suited to their needs."

Andrew deLaski, executive director of the Appliance Standards Awareness Project, a coalition of groups that advocate for energy conservation, said he had never seen such a directive to bypass the standard rulemaking process. He said Trump's actions may violate the Administrative Procedure Act, which requires agencies to solicit public comments on rules, as well as the Energy Policy and Conservation Act, which prohibits the Energy Department from weakening existing efficiency standards.

"It's patently illegal, so hold your horses," deLaski said.

At the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, a little-known branch of the Labor Department charged with rooting out discrimination among government contractors, enforcement of equal employment opportunity (EEO) laws has also sputtered.

On Jan. 24, the acting secretary of labor issued a memo instructing staff to "cease and desist" work required by a 1965 executive order that Trump had repealed on Jan. 21, according to four employees and a copy of the memo obtained by The Washington Post. Since then, the employees said, work at the entire branch has ground to a halt, even though much of it is still mandated by EEO laws from 1973 and 1974 that have not been overturned.

Stalled activities include audits of contractors' hiring and pay practices to ensure that companies are not discriminating on the basis of race or gender. Complaints have also piled up from veterans and people with disabilities.

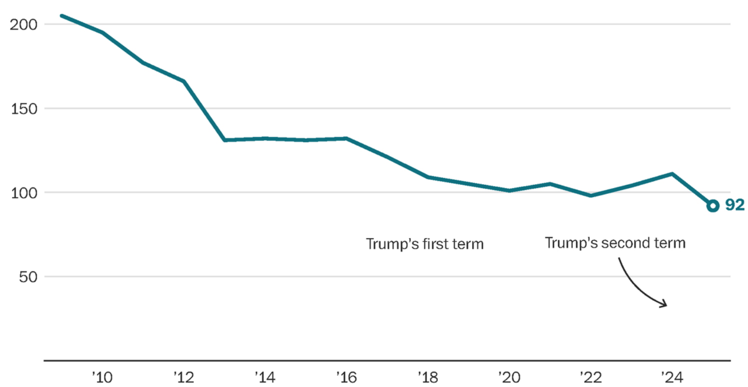
And at the Environmental Protection Agency, Trump officials have scaled back enforcement of rules intended to curb air and water pollution from power plants, oil refineries, hazardous waste sites and other industrial facilities.

The EPA's enforcement office has been initiating 19 fewer cases per month on average than the Biden administration during its last year in office, according to an analysis of federal data conducted by the Environmental Integrity Project, a watchdog group. The Trump administration filed 92 cases per month on average during its first three full months in office — February, March and April — the analysis found. The Biden administration brought 111 cases per month on average in 2024. During the first three months of Trump's first term, the EPA opened an average of 116 enforcement cases per month.

"We are deeply concerned about EPA slowing down or walking away from enforcement, particularly for violations at fossil fuel and petrochemical operations," said Jen Duggan, the executive director of the Environmental Integrity Project.

Monthly average EPA case initiations, by administration

The Environmental Protection Agency's enforcement office has initiated fewer cases per month over the last decade because of budget cuts. Enforcement has also fallen sharply since President Donald Trump took office on Jan. 20.



Source: Environmental Integrity Project analysis of federal data

MAXINE JOSELOW / THE WASHINGTON POST

Overall, EPA enforcement actions have fallen during the past decade because of budget cuts and staffing declines. Under Trump, however, a March 12 memo stated that the agency would no longer take enforcement actions that could "shut down any stage of energy production" unless there's an "imminent" threat to public health.

This directive could benefit the oil and gas sector and could "violate a fundamental rule of enforcement, which is that there should be no favored or disfavored industries," said David Uhlmann, who led the EPA's enforcement office under Biden. "No one gets special treatment."

Spokespeople for the Energy and Labor departments and the EPA did not respond to requests for comment.

Experts on presidential power said the wide-ranging enforcement slowdown in Trump's second term has no modern precedent.

Trump is "saying across the board that 'if I don't like it, I'm not going to enforce it,'" said Peter Shane, an emeritus law professor at Ohio State University and a scholar in residence at NYU. "To my knowledge, no other president has taken that kind of stance."

Shane said presidents in both parties have taken smaller steps to stop enforcing laws they disliked. President Richard M. Nixon refused to enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights Act because he opposed busing children to limit racial segregation in schools. Obama deprioritized the deportation of certain undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, leading to complaints from conservatives that the administration was not enforcing certain immigration laws.

With the downturn in enforcement and a possible recession looming, many big law firms have slowed recruitment and hiring for their practices that defend companies against enforcement actions, legal recruiters said.

"Do we see a slowdown coming in the enforcement landscape? The answer, by and large, is yes," said Lauren Drake, the comanaging partner in the D.C. office of the legal recruiting firm Macrae.

The trend is especially pronounced, recruiters said, at law firms that specialize in defending clients against actions by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The Trump administration has sought to shutter the CFPB, which was established in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis to combat unfair, deceptive and abusive financial practices. In March, the administration fired most of the agency's workforce, a move that a federal judge has temporarily blocked.

While the litigation plays out, political leaders have instructed CFPB employees not to work on most earlier-stage enforcement cases, according to two people familiar with the situation who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss internal deliberations. Since Trump took power, the CFPB has also dropped at least 21 lawsuits against entities including Walmart and Bank of America, a review of news reports and other public records shows.

"CFPB enforcement work is dormant completely," said Stephen Springer, a managing partner in the D.C. office of the legal recruiting firm Major, Lindsey & Africa.

"I don't think anybody expects those enforcement areas to be particularly busy for the next three years," he said, "unless there's a dramatic change."

Julian Mark contributed to this report.

Environmental Council of the States
1250 H Street NW, Suite 850 | Washington, DC 20005
(202) 266-4920 | www.ecos.org
ECOS

May 3, 2025

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW, WJC Building North/South Room: 1448K
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin,

Yesterday, the Office of Management of Budget (OMB) sent the White House recommendations for discretionary funding to the United States Senate for fiscal year (FY) 2026. In response, the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) Officers urgently request an in-person meeting with you to discuss the fiscal implications of the FY2026 recommendations for states.

As we understand the recommendation, the White House recommended elimination or cuts to categorical grant programs that will devastate economic development, critical infrastructure, and environmental protections across the nation.

States carry out more than 90% of the nation's federal environmental programs in communities around the United States, and states, state legislatures, and the business community depend on Congress to fund our efforts through grants and partnerships with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Such dramatic budget cuts to states will incapacitate state environmental programs while creating significant uncertainty for state legislatures and businesses across the United States. Further, the proposal to dramatically shrink the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds will also hurt the heretofore unified effort to address the nation's water infrastructure needs, which is necessary not only to protect human health and the environment, but also to grow the economy.

If Congress were to adopt the White House recommendation for discretionary spending, states may be required to terminate primacy, delegation, or authorization agreements and return full program implementation to EPA. This would overwhelm EPA and have detrimental impacts to economic development. In addition, state primacy, delegation, or authorizations were approved by EPA and published in the Federal Register following public notice and comment. Such primacy, delegation, or authorization agreements are predicated on commitments that include a federal and state cost share. A reduction or elimination of the federal cost share will create implementation issues resulting in legal liabilities that may contribute to a state's decision to return a program to EPA for implementation within a state.

Pursuant to principles of cooperative federalism, EPA and states working in partnership through regular discussions would greatly benefit our organizations and we stand ready to have such discussions.

Thank you.

James Kenney   Chris Wells   Leah Feldon   Myra Reece

Cc:
Region 1, Mark Sanborn
Region 2, Mike Martucci
Region 3, Amy Van Blarcom-Lackey
Region 4, Kevin McOmber
Region 5, Anne Vogel
Region 6, Scott Mason
Region 7, Jim Macy
Region 8, Cyrus Western
Region 9, Josh Cook
Region 10, Emma Pokon
Assistant Deputy Administrator, Travis Voyles
Associate Administrator, Sarah Talmage